THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

IN SEARCH OF FERTILE PASTURES: LIVELIHOOD PURSUIT AND THE REPRODUCTION OF THE SOCIAL ORDER BY YOUTH IN RURAL MONGOLIA

By

Victoria Shauna Laidlaw ©

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Abstract

This work inquires into the dynamics of the relationship between youth in rural Mongolia, ages 16 to 25, and their pursuit of livelihood. This cohort of youth, born between 1981 and 1990, is the first generation to grow up during Mongolia's transition from a socialist political and economic system to a democratic society with a free market. The transition was marked by economic shocks which caused many of the hard won social advances (high literacy rate, low infant and maternal mortality rate, absence of unemployment and poverty) to decline dramatically. Now this generation of youth are on the threshold of pursuing livelihoods and as such are actively involved in the reproduction of Mongolian society.

This inquiry incorporates both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The quantitative section examines factors that contribute to youth being more or less likely to expect to engage in the traditional practice of pastoralism. The statistical analysis of survey data revealed that youth who had to help with their family's herds were more likely to expect to herd as a livelihood than those who had high educational aspirations such as post-secondary schooling. The qualitative section looks at the perceptions that youth and parents of youth have about migrating to Mongolia's capital city, Ulaanbaatar, in order to take advantage of the schooling (and later employment) options located there. This section offers an understanding of youth's actions that seeks to reach beyond current understandings of migrants as either recipients of structural forces or as motivated opportunists. The most pervasive theme arising from this analysis, the notion that a 'better life' is obtained in the city, is discussed vis-à-vis youth's reproduction of the social order.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Jessica and Ewan:

may you forever be impassioned to find and fulfill your destiny.

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I would like to thank some institutions and individuals whose assistance has been instrumental in enabling me to complete this thesis and my academic study program. My thanks go to the Canadian Institute of Health Research, the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for the Queen Elizabeth II Masters Scholarship, and the Department of Rural Economy for their financial support, without which this journey would never have been possible.

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Table of Contents

Sine Qua Non 1

Chapter One: Introduction 2

Taking a Snapshot of History: Defining the Study

Chapter Two: Paper #1 22

Looking to the Future: the Relationship Between Educational Attainment and Mongolian Youth's Expectation to Herd

Chapter Three: Paper #2 52

'Moving to a Better Pasture': Youth Rural to Urban Migration in Mongolia

Chapter Four: Conclusions and Future Research 87

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

Appendices:

A. Timeline for Creation of Survey and Interview Studies 94
B. Survey Information Sheet 95
C. Survey Questionnaire 96
D. Interview Information Sheet 118
E. Interview Consent Form 120
F. Interview Questions 121

Supplementary References 123

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Figure 1 : Hypothesis for Youth's Expectation to Herd 35

Tables

Table 1 : Descriptive Statistics 38

Table 2 : Factors Affecting Youth's (ages 16-25) Expectation to Herd 41

List of Tables

Tables

Table 1 : Descriptive Statistics 38

Table 2 : Factors Affecting Youth's (ages 16-25) Expectation to Herd 41

List of Figures

Figures

Figure 1 : Hypothesis for Youth's Expectation to Herd 35

Sine Qua Non

*The principle of reason that was the basic assumption of the discourse of modern society from the enlightenment on, with its connotation of values that implied also a universal ethos, a morality, was conceived of a unifying element of mankind [*sic*]. The rationality of Homo Sapiens with his reasonable thought was also conceived as a main instrument for finding the scientific truth and thus science came to be regarded as one of the most valuable achievements of our society. Now, along with the expulsion of reason from the existential domain, there are also attempts to challenge its importanee in the epistemological sphere. The idea of rationality, on which the generally accepted theory of knowledge was based, assumed a priori the existence of an objective reality and the possibility that the rational mind can discover its more profound aspects and laws and that way can enhance the possibility for mankind to live better, to cope with the shortcoming caused always by ignorance and prejudice. This principle becomes doubtful today, in effect due to new scientific findings. The objective reality per se doesn't exist anymore; it is not accepted as given, or to put it in other terms, the target of reasonable thought is not any longer to discover nature's laws, but to construe reality and develop its own possibilities and creative capacities.*

Tulea & Krausz, 2002:xiii
Starting the Twenty-First Century: Sociological Reflections and Challenges

"No, no," says Coyote. "It's the truth."

"There are no truths, Coyote," I says, "Only stories."

Thomas King, 1993:391
Green Grass Running Water

Chapter One

Taking a Snapshot of History: Defining the Study

> The true criticism of market society is not that it was based on economics – in a sense, any and every society must be based on it – but that its economy was based on self-interest. Such an organization of economic life is entirely unnatural, in the strictly empirical sense of *exceptional*. Nineteenth century thinkers assumed that in his economic activity man [sic] strove for profit, that his materialistic propensities would induce him to choose the lesser instead of the greater effort and to expect payment for his labour; in short, that in his economic activity he would tend to abide by what they described as economic rationality, and that all contrary behavior was the result of outside interference. It followed that markets were natural institutions, that they would spontaneously arise if only men were let alone...Actually, as we now know, the behavior of man both in his primitive state and right through the course of history has been almost the opposite from that implied in this view.
>
> Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 1944: 249-50

Introduction

History will record the last decade of the 20th century as marking the end of a great experiment that failed: the collapse of state socialism (Ryvkina & Kosals, 2002:103). The impact of such significant political and economic change reverberated throughout the world and as a result will leave lasting impressions on the social landscape. It may take many generations to fully understand the impact that state socialism had upon the world stage, from its inception to its final demise, as well as the outcomes of the particular path each nation traveled in its transition to a market-based economy and democratic governance.

This study is based on data collected from Mongolia, the second nation after Russia to take on the socialist mantle in 1921. From then until 1989, the Mongolian people attained impressive social indicators despite a relatively low per capita GDP: low infant and maternal mortality rates, low income disparity, high education and literacy rates, full and stable levels of employment, and a virtual absence of poverty (Nixson & Walters, 2006; Mearns, 2004). However, after the transition these indicators plummeted and Mongolia now "exhibits the classic characteristics of a low-income, less developed country." (Nixson & Walters, 2006:1558) Urban and rural areas were profoundly affected albeit in different ways. Where rural children previously kept pace with their urban counterparts in educational achievement, differential outcomes are now evident (Demberel & Penn, 2006). Where employment in rural areas was supported by government, now a widespread lack of jobs encourages people to travel to the capital city of Ulaanbaatar to find better opportunities or lives there (Algaa, 2007). Where pastoralism was well supported by government in the form of state-run co-operatives, or *negdels,* providing assistance for base camp moves and transportation of animal products to market; herders must now bear the risks and uncertainties of pastoralism on their own (Potkanski & Szynkiewicz, 1993:79). Clearly the rural social landscape was significantly affected by the transition to a market economy with aftershocks that continue to reverberate in Mongolian society to this day.

Background

Communism ended for Mongolia with the adoption of a constitution in 1992 after the holding of free and open democratic elections. Mongolia's situation presents interesting research questions for the simple reason that it was a socialist country that had to rapidly change economically and politically due to mitigating external and internal factors: the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) in the former and a grass-roots push for democratic reform in the latter. These two events profoundly affected the Mongolian people both in rural and urban areas since it meant a complete destabilization of the nation's economy.

The collapse of the CMEA in 1991 was catastrophic for Mongolia. After becoming a full member of the Council in 1962 Mongolia was given "preferential treatment" by other socialist nations with higher levels of productivity and faster growth in the form of aid, loans and special export prices. This was due primarily to the socialist notion of "equality in the family" as well as Mongolia's "flagship" role of advanced social development as compared to other Asian nations. (Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe, 2006:67-69) No less devastating, however, was the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was the primary purchaser of Mongolia's animal products (meat, wool, leather) and copper (Schmidt, 1995) Further, in losing the Soviet Union as a trading partner, Mongolia also lost a valuable provider of technical assistance and expertise.

However, Mongolian society is interesting for another, more compelling reason: how the particular mode of economic transition - 'shock therapy'[1] - affected the population, particularly the pastoralist agricultural sector; a sector that encompassed approximately half of the population. Prior to the end of communism, pastoralism was well supported by the government in terms of labour, transportation and market access (Swift *et al.*, 1990). During the transition the government rapidly privatized the agricultural sector, divesting itself of the publicly owned livestock and equipment by means of a voucher system. Vouchers could be used to purchase livestock, equipment, vehicles, and other collective assets, like winter shelters for animals (Fernandez-Gimenez,

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[1] The so-called 'shock therapy' structural adjustments are advocated by the International Monetary Foundation and the World Bank as the most direct route to economic reform by tearing down old institutions and replacing them with new ones. Privatization of state resources is the key strategy of this endeavour (Nixson & Walters, 2006:1558)

2001). Access to animals and assets prompted many newly unemployed persons in the city to go to the countryside to become herders (ibid:52). This trend largely reversed itself by the mid-1990s since many of these herders lacked the skills to successfully herd. In general, after the transition the livestock sector was relatively neglected with a dearth of public funds. Mearns argues that the retrenchment of the public sector resulted in undermining "the essential public goods foundation for a productive agricultural sector." (2004:115)

Potkanski & Szynkiewicz (1993) found that pastoralists[2] now faced many significant problems of "inadequate or expensive services necessary for efficient pastoral production" (61) which included hay provision (especially in the Gobi), transportation, acquisition of consumer goods, and in the marketing of animal products. Herders were very aware "that individual households cannot survive alone in the market environment" (ibid) and needed some kind of collective arrangement to mitigate this but had yet to work out an effective way of achieving this level of cooperation. Some have proposed that herders return to the pre-1921 Communist Revolution style of collective herding, called *khot ail*, which involved small groups of households camping together and sharing labour. Barzagur argues that the new *khot ail* "should combine appropriate features of both traditional and contemporary institutions." (2002:22)

As of 2005, pastoralists comprise 40 percent of Mongolia's population, down from 48.6 percent in 2000 (UNdata, 2007). The agricultural sector makes up 18.8 percent of Mongolia's GDP, as of 2006 data, which has fallen since its 2000 level of 29.3 percent (UNDP, 2007) Industry's contribution to the GDP, on the other hand, has nearly doubled in the past six years from 22.2 percent in 2000 to 40.3 percent in 2007 (ibid). Clearly, Mongolia's change in emphasis from agriculture to industry has definite implications for the rural population who rely on pastoralism for their livelihood.

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[2] Pastoralists and herders are used interchangeably throughout the document and both mean the same thing: persons whose primary livelihood is derived from animal husbandry.

Another institution severely impacted by the transition to a market economy was the education sector. Government withdrawal from full educational funding meant that parents now had to pay tuition for their children to attend school. While education is constitutionally guaranteed until the end of grade eight, many schools faced funding shortfalls and required parents to pay the difference. This may have required cash or in-kind payments, like meat, or both. School enrolment declined and there began to be an increase in drop-outs, due also in part to the increased demand of young people (primarily males) to remain at home and help with the herding household (Mearns, 2004). Rural schools suffered from a lack of general maintenance and upkeep. Often school was cancelled in winter due to a lack of proper heating since the schools could not afford the necessary coal (Batbaatar *et al*, 2005). Currently, Mongolia still ranks high with school enrolment as compared to other low-income countries, but fails to compare to what it had achieved in the communist era (Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe, 2006)

Since most scholarly, government and non-governmental organizations' reports introduce their particular subject matter by citing the collapse of socialism and subsequent transition to a market economy as the origin of the current "underachieving" milieu, it is possible to get a depressing image of Mongolia. This may indeed be understandable and certainly warranted considering where Mongolia was in 1989 compared to where the country is today. However, it is important to look beyond the material and physical indicators to see and understand the vitality and resilience of the Mongolian people who will recover from this precarious time in their nation's history. Already data is beginning to be compiled of the informal sector which acts as a "safety net" with livestock herding "in providing employment opportunities and basic livelihoods." (Morris: 2001:1; see also Bikales et al, 2000). It is recognized that in many cases "necessity outweighs experience"; as one person put it "'Dogs instinctively swim when thrown into water. So did I'". (Morris, 2001:29) Whilst this latter comment could be accused of being overly optimistic it is equally possible that Western observers of recent developments in Mongolia may be overly pessimistic in their assessments. What is missing from much of the literature on post-socialist Mongolia is an understanding of how the society is being reproduced in the midst of tremendous economic, social and political change. Or, to put it colloquially, now that they have lemons how are they making lemonade?

In Search of Fertile Pastures...

This work is concerned with understanding two aspects of the social world of rural Mongolian youth: firstly, their pursuits of livelihood and secondly, how these pursuits 'fit' into Mongolian society, or social order. These youth, I argue, are in search of fertile pastures through which to imagine and realize their futures; an analogy that fits well with the pastoral practice of moving animals "due to adverse local grazing conditions", known as '*otor*' (Potkanski & Szynkiewicz (1992:iv). The following paragraphs elaborate more fully the concepts of livelihood and social order so as to provide the larger context upon which this work rests.

Livelihood is a complex thing and cannot be reduced to a pat definition. It cannot be reduced to income (Lipton & Maxwell, 1992), but cash and in-kind inputs are certainly one of the important components. It also includes

> the social institutions (kin, family, compound, village and so on), gender relations, and property rights required to support and sustain a given standard of living...[as

> well as] access to, and benefits derived from, social and public services provided by the state such as education, health services, roads, water supplies and so on. (Ellis, 1998: 4)

The pursuit of livelihood has also changed since the transition from communism to capitalism and democracy. Youth are able to seek livelihood options from those provided by the market economy, an option their parents did not have. While having a greater range of livelihood 'choices', youth have also gained an increased amount of risk. Unemployment and poverty are now permanent features of Mongolian society.

The concept of livelihoods is a tangible item whereas social order is not. For sociologists, it represents the "stable patterns of social expectations and social structure that exist in any society" as well as the maintenance of these patterns (Jary & Jary, 2000:572). What is fascinating about the social order is how it is maintained despite the fact that society is seemingly made up of individuals with free will. Talcott Parsons, one of the most influential sociologists in the 20th century, conceptualized this as "'the problem of social order': why is it that society is not characterized by a 'Hobbesian'[3] war of all against all?" (ibid:442) It remains a central problem in sociology (ibid: 270) with other theorists, like the ones I discuss in Chapter 3, also seeking to resolve it. Like Parsons, each of these theorists argue for a different understanding of how social order is reproduced.

Overarching Household Survey Project

This work grew out of an overarching project funded by the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR). The research project was a partnership between Canadian and

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[3] Hobbes (1588-1679) was one of the first philosophers and political theorists to try to establish a 'science' of civil society. He submitted that humans, by nature, were lawless and appetite driven, as such life was nothing but "unmitigated strife, in which there was no security for any human purpose." (Jary & Jary, 2000: 270) However, he asserted that since we have reason, we would agree to submit to authority in order to gain safety and security.

Mongolian researchers, the former from the University of Alberta[4] and the latter from the National Centre for Health Development (NCHD)[5]. This was the final phase of a three-stage initiative designed to assess the social determinants of adolescent health in rural Mongolia. In consultation with local government leaders, Delgertsogt *Soum* (small rural administrative unit) in Dundgovi *Aimag* (province) was selected by researchers as an appropriate place to conduct research on rural adolescent health due to its proximity to a 'main' road leading south to Mandalgovi, the *aimag* centre, and north to Ulaanbaatar, the capital city.

In the second stage, researchers utilized participatory rural appraisal methods[6] to determine issues important to rural residents in the *soum*. The findings from the participatory exercises yielded three key concepts of importance: resilience, social support and migration. I took the lead role in developing a survey and then the larger team revised it with our Mongolian partners; it was subsequently pretested in a *soum* far from the study area. We then revised it once more before administering the survey in the community with the help of nineteen local enumerators, all of whom were trained in a day long session on human ethics and administration procedures to ensure reliability and validity.

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[4] Dr. Lory Laing, principal investigator is from the School of Public Health and Dr. Naomi Krogman is from the Department of Rural Economy.

[5] NCHD is a semi-autonomous body reporting to the Ministry of Health. Its responsibilities include health surveillance, health promotion, health education, and health policy and management advice.

[6] Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) is an innovative form of data collection that comes out of participatory research (Maalim, 2006). It places emphasis on a team approach between those initiating the research and those involved as participants come up with possible solutions to research questions. The process seeks to transcend the researcher-researched hierarchy to engender empowerment amongst rural peoples "enabling them to analyze their world and [could]…lead into their planning and action." (Chambers, 1994b: 1266, see also Chambers, 1994a)

Research Purpose and Objectives

This work's overall objective is to understand how Mongolian society is reproduced by sociologically examining one facet of it. This is akin to the notion that by adhering to grammatical rules in speech, we reproduce the entire language; or that the act of writing a book in English is to reproduce the whole of English literature (Frye, 1957). The facet under examination is how the future plans of rural Mongolian youth (both in their inception and execution) reproduce Mongolian society. This project includes two intertwined areas of investigation that pertain to youth: livelihood attainment and rural to urban migration. These areas of investigation are interesting for two important reasons: firstly, the process that marks young people's transition from dependence to independence is a fundamental stage in the life course; knowledge in this area is crucial to assist youth, parents, educators, policy makers and society in general to mitigate the passage's more precarious areas. Due to Mongolia's current economic, social and political situation, knowledge in this area is all the more pressing. Secondly, there are limited studies on how youth reproduce their societies through everyday actions, with virtually none in the Mongolian context.

These elements of the social world are intertwined: the kind of livelihood youth choose will invariably impact whether or not they leave the rural countryside and move to urban areas. Since the privatization of the herd animals, there is no longer government support for *aimag* (provincial) centres to serve the pastoral economy (Morris, 2001). As a result, employment is primarily found in herding itself. Youth who do not expect to herd, because they prefer education or lack the interest and/or ability to do so (no money to buy animals, no one to hire them, etc.), will most likely have to leave the countryside since employment opportunities are not plentiful.

The objective of the first study was to determine the factors that contribute to youth's expectation to herd. After a substantial literature review it remained unclear as to why Mongolian youth make the particular livelihood decisions they do, as well as what circumstances surround these decisions. Of interest specifically were the factors that encourage or discourage youth to engage in pastoralism or to pursue post-secondary studies. In terms of education, did youth's educational goals match with their ability to pursue them? Did youth face barriers to their occupational and educational goals, and if so what were they? Is gender a factor in terms of who expects to herd and who plans to pursue post-secondary studies?

It was determined earlier on in the planning stages of the project that this information would be obtained from the survey data. The data was analyzed using SPSS, a frequently used statistical software program for quantitative social data analysis. The use of survey data and statistical analysis was deemed a useful method to garner information on youth livelihood attainment since both are appropriate when the population under investigation is quite large.

The objective of the second study was to understand the interplay between youth's livelihood decisions and the larger societal forces that coalesced in their lives. A second literature review was conducted to supplement the conversation on what had been written about youth migrants. Subsequently, this study's orienting research question arose, asking how youth conceived of and understood rural to urban migration, both theirs and that of others.

My natural orientation is to use qualitative approaches, thus I was drawn to interview youth and parents of youth, and believe it was the most efficacious method to obtain detailed contextual information around youths' livelihood and migration choices. I hoped that this method would reveal the subtle and (not so subtle) foundations that underpin their beliefs about societal practices. The interviews were analyzed by NVivo, a qualitative software package that is particularly useful for organizing interview data.

Theoretical Guidance

Theoretical guidance for this project comes from four primary sources. The first comes out of the post-socialist migration literature. While this body of literature is still in its infancy and steadily growing, it is illustrative of the conditions produced when a command economy is replaced with measures to foster a market economy. The withdrawal of state socialism meant that fundamental features of life were altered; as such these populations had to adapt and fill in where the social institutions were crippled or had vanished. This literature is useful for this project for two reasons: first, it provides an excellent picture of what happens when a particular society's material reality is fundamentally altered through aggressive economic and political initiatives; second it simultaneously describes the continuum of human responses to a dramatically altered economic system.

The second source is the rural to urban migration literature which, for the most part, poses migration phenomena as comprised of either 'push' or 'pull' factors, or a combination of the two. Factors such as economic change, environmental degradation, or lack of employment opportunities are considered 'push' factors, propelling people to leave their current residences. These can also be conceived of as structural reasons promoting migration, where individuals must adapt to societal forces that are largely beyond their control. On the other pole, a burgeoning economy, copious manufacturing jobs, for example, or substantial educational opportunities are considered 'pull' factors. These can be understood also in terms of personal agency, where people choose to undertake migration in order to take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves in the receiving area. This area of scholarship is an essential starting point to begin the discussion on youth reproduction of society in Mongolia since it details how structural forces, pushing and pulling out people from rural settings, are played out in everyday life.

The third area of guidance comes directly from sociological theorizing on the relationship between structures and the agency of individuals. Specifically, the theories of Anthony Giddens, Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault are discussed as to their efficacy of explaining how the social order is reproduced. Structure and agency theories facilitate discussion about meaning-making by youth, rule-following by youth across a range of possibilities, and how urban migration of rural youth reproduces Mongolian society.

The fourth and final area of guidance is offered by Ludwig Wittgenstein, who is brought in to respond to the structure and agency theories in order to round out the discussion and provide perhaps a fuller treatment of the underlying phenomenon at hand: the reproduction of society through the maintenance of social order. Wittgenstein gives us an excellent way of understanding how social order is maintained and reproduced by people's following of rules. Wittgenstein's philosophies are especially useful for this project since they allow for a surpassing of the short-comings of the structure and agency theories.

Significance and Contribution of Research

The primary significance of this project is in its particular approach to viewing the reproduction of Mongolian society through the decisions and activities of rural youth. There is very little scholarship to date on Mongolian youth and how they are responding to the market economy and limitations within their rural herding communities. Within this approach is a vision of youth that seeks to re-conceptualize them from being construed as mere pawns reacting to impersonal social forces, or as opportunists who seek to maximize their utility. Since this approach is largely absent from the developing body of scholarly literature its addition will add to the conversation and potentially foster other ways of envisioning rural-urban dynamics in post-socialist Mongolia.

A second significant contribution is in the analysis of livelihood attainment by using "expectation to herd" as a measure. This is an important addition to knowledge on pastoralism in late modernity since there are no other studies that examine the factors that would enhance or inhibit the expectation of youth to engage in herding.

Limitations of Research

While this project is able to offer a perspective on how Mongolian youth reproduce the social order vis-à-vis livelihood attainment and rural to urban migration it cannot definitively speak for all youth at all times. The findings and analysis are constrained first, temporally and spatially and second, by the subjectivities of the researchers. Temporal and spatial constraints are such that studies conducted at different times and places may reveal completely different findings either because the data is different or the particular analysis techniques have changed. This has implications both within Mongolia as well as outside of it, in terms of generalizing to other pastoralist groups. Any assessment of the knowledge generated within this project must acknowledge the particular milieu in which it was obtained, i.e., over one three week time period, in one Gobi desert community, viewed through Canadian sociologists' lenses and urban Mongolian health professional priorities. The subjectivities of the researchers must be accounted for since it is unavoidable that their world-view influences final data interpretations. Our research team tried to minimize extreme biases by working closely with local government and educational liaisons in the community to: collaboratively choose community-based methodological approaches for the participatory exercises completed before I began my study; choose key topics from the participatory exercises to build upon in the survey; and to work closely with Mongolian collaborators who have worked across a number of rural Mongolian communities to design the survey questions and sampling frame, and make sense out of our findings.

It is also necessary to discuss the challenges of language translation. Both the survey and the interviews needed to be translated from English to Mongolian and back to English again. This process may have allowed for meaning to be distorted, truncated or lost. All of the interpretations must be viewed with this fact in mind. However, due to the circumstances: non-Mongolian speaking Canadian researchers and non-English speaking Mongolian respondents, the project designers accommodated this situation and made every effort to minimize the impact of translation upon the study's results. Once the survey was translated from English to Mongolian, the translation was reviewed by a native Mongolian speaker unrelated to the study. She posed questions and asked for clarifications that were then sent back to our Mongolian partners, and this careful iterative practice likely enhanced the accuracy of our interpretations. The survey's open-ended responses were translated from Mongolian to English in the field and then checked again for accuracy by the aforementioned non-project-related native Mongolian speaker. This process was also done for the interviews as well. Thus, within our constraints, every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of the translation.

Lastly, this project refuses to have the last word on Mongolian youth's reproduction of the social order. The data shall forever be open to further interpretation and the results to reinterpretation. This thesis presently stands as an example of scholarly effort in the early 21st century that makes certain assertions whilst acknowledging its selfsame contingency.

Reflections on Social Location

People's social location(s) are determined by their particular culture. In the European influenced industrialized society that I live in, social location is conceived of on a macro scale in terms of class, gender, ethnicity, ability and sexual orientation. On a micro scale social location exists in the various roles people occupy, such as mother, wife, or student. While sociology has done a worthy job of blurring the boundaries within and between these macro and micro scales it is still possible to determine some pertinent subjectivities that would need to be either eliminated or identified. In the following paragraphs I expound on my social location first as a person and then as an academic.

Most immediately, I am female with northern and eastern European ethnic roots. I was raised by a single mother with working class values on a middle-class income. I was born in Canada's Northwest Territories and grew up in a series of small communities, the largest having 3 000 people. The majority of the population in these communities was Gwich'in and Inuvialuit meaning that, as a Caucasian, I was in the minority. In addition, the distance between these communities and the largest urban centre in southern Canada meant that 'the South' was not just geographically far away but was also economically and culturally distant. As a result I grew up in an environment that was constantly being measured against prosperous southern Canada. I was able to spend considerable time 'down South' on vacations as well as at boarding schools before leaving the North permanently at the age of 25. As a result, the world view I brought to Mongolia was one that sensitized me to see not "a disadvantaged people" but rather one characterized by resilience and determination; making the best with what they had available to them, not wasting a thing.

Secondarily, I entered the university as a mature student, at age 30. This meant that I brought with me many so-called adult experiences: I have been married and have two children, which I raised jointly with their fathers while going to school. These experiences mean that I will approach life with less idealism and more pragmatism than perhaps others with less life experience. It may also have made me acutely aware of the struggles that Mongolians were experiencing while grappling with their particular economic circumstances.

Academically, significant issues arise when researchers are socialized and trained in a so-called first world Western industrialized nation and conduct research in a second world nation that, some argue, has slipped into third world status. One of the dangers could be the proclivity to see Mongolia as a place in desperate need of Western assistance and intervention on all levels. Further, Mongolians themselves could seem 'backward' since they lack the technological assets that are ubiquitous in an industrialized nation. Since I am a product of an industrialized first world nation's socialization and academic training I would need to be aware that this orientation could blind me to the ways in which Mongolians attend to the realities of their daily lives, solving their problems as they go. I would also remember that this standpoint could also privilege an Enlightenment paradigm that has been determined to be deeply implicated in oppressive practices of power [see Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) on academia's treatment of indigenous peoples]. By keeping these two critiques of Western culture in mind it is possible to suspend judgment about what Mongolians *should* be doing to confront the social problems they are grappling with.

Secondly, the dearth of scholarly literature coming out of Mongolia means that academic researchers are limited to the view of the Mongolian social world that originates from West: scholars, financial organizations (World Bank, International Monetary Foundation, or Asian Development Bank) or non-governmental organizations (Save the Children UK, Open Society, or Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre). This means that researchers must rely primarily on scholarship that may not originate from a Mongolian worldview. As a researcher limited in this way I strove to obtain as many documents as possible from as diverse sources as possible. By using the Internet's search engines (namely Google Scholar) it was possible to obtain references of works by Mongolian authors. More significantly, however, is the fact that the overarching project was a joint effort by Canadian and Mongolian researchers. This ensured that a Mongolian perspective was incorporated in the research design at every step. This effort also included the added benefit of exposing each research member to the practices of the other, as all field work involved intense cooperation and exchange. I feel privileged to have been part of this authentic international collaborative project, to witness capacity building as part of the research, and to have the opportunity to confront my own assumptions as part of cross-cultural research.

Organization of Thesis

The thesis is organized around two papers which have been written with the view to be submitted and published in two different refereed journals. The first chapter is the paper entitled, 'Looking to the Future: the Relationship Between Educational Attainment and Mongolian Youth's Expectation to Herd', and is a quantitative analysis examining young rural Mongolian's livelihood plans as they pertain to herding and post-secondary education. The second chapter is the paper entitled, ''Moving to a Better Pasture': Youth Rural to Urban Migration in Mongolia' and is a qualitative analysis describing young rural Mongolian's perceptions on pursuit of livelihood. Chapter four contains a synthesis of both papers and offers conclusions as well as ideas for future research. The appendices follow chapter four and consists of the study's relevant documents.

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Chapter Two: Paper #1

Looking to the Future: the Relationship Between Educational Attainment and Mongolian Youth's Expectation to Herd

We live in an era where everything is possible and nothing is certain.

- Václav Havel, former playwright and
[first] president of the Czech Republic
(quoted in Salmi, 2002:39)

(Target Journal – *Sociologia Ruralis*)

Abstract:

This study examines factors surrounding livelihood attainment by rural youth in a small region of Mongolia's Gobi desert. Using a subset of youth from a 928 person survey completed in the fall 2006, logistic regression is used to assess the likelihood of whether or not youth will expect to engage in the traditional practice of pastoral herding based on such factors as gender, education attained, future education goals, the need to help with herding in the pastoral household, and not having enough money to attain desired educational goals. The regression results demonstrated that youth who have post secondary education and who do not have enough money for their educational goals are less likely to expect to herd while those who have to help with the pastoral household are more likely to expect to herd. It is concluded that post-secondary educational attainment is a strong deterrent to youth's likelihood to herd.

Introduction :

Youth migration to urban areas is a world-wide phenomenon, occurring in developed and developing nations alike. It affects groups with more 'traditional' cultures (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2006) as well as those of a more 'modern' orientation (Wiborg, 2004). Stockdale (2002, 2004) has documented a world-wide trend of rural youth migration to urban areas. Popular media has also emphasised youths' exodus from rural areas, given the general lack of opportunity there for education, jobs and interesting things to do (BBC News, 2002; Eastern Daily Press 24, 2007; Greater Halifax Partnership, 2007; News Wales, 2005). This study, situated in post-socialist Mongolia, identifies some of the factors that influence the likelihood that rural youth expect to engage in pastoralism, or animal husbandry, the primary agricultural production of the country. Knowing what encourages youth to stay and herd is important since these same factors also identify those who are most likely to leave. Initial assumptions propose that those with high educational hopes are more likely to leave their hometowns towns for urban zones, like the capital of Ulaanbaatar, in search of educational and employment opportunities that cities can provide.

The current study is concerned with a population of rural Mongolian youth, ages 16 – 25, surveyed in the fall of 2005. Since 1990, Mongolia has experienced significant change since its transition from socialist to capitalist economy. It is important to ask basic questions as to why rural youth make certain livelihood decisions in order to understand the circumstances that push youth away from rural areas or pull them to urban areas. To date, few Mongolian scholars have revisited the factors that encourage or discourage youth to engage in the traditional practice of herding or to pursue post-secondary studies. Obvious resulting questions follow around youth's educational goals and their ability to pursue them: do youth face barriers to their occupational and educational goals? If so, what are they? Does gender matter as to who plans to herd and who plans to attend post-secondary school?

The significance of this research lies in three areas: first, it is a pioneering study taking as its subject the first cohort of youth who grew up in post-socialist Mongolia ready to enter a livelihood. Since the transition three key areas of opportunity lie in pastoralism, the labour market, and via post-secondary schooling, a professional occupation later on. Second, this study examines factors that influence rural youth's choice of livelihood. Lastly, this study describes which youth are more likely to expect to engage in pastoralism, thus providing a clearer picture of the extent to which the back bone industry of the country may be replenished (or not) by young people.

Locating this Study

There are three areas of research that guide and situate this study. The first describes the rural to urban migration of young people in both industrialised and post-socialist nations, the second examines the particular post-socialist context that Mongolian youth are now located in, and the third identifies the specific challenges that rural youth in Mongolia grapple with as they pursue a chosen livelihood.

Rural to urban youth migration

Research on rural to urban youth migration has been well documented by youth scholars as well as those studying migration itself since the migration practices of youth "have the strongest long-term consequences for rural societies." (Rye & Blekesaune, 2007:170) Explanations for the observed rural decline and population loss are due to a host of reasons, primarily economic, including: deregulation of national economies, privatisation of public utilities, reduction of import tariffs, and introduction of competition policies (Gabriel, 2006; White & Wyn, 2004). In Australia, while these economic initiatives may have helped national long term growth they simultaneously increased the inequality between urban and rural areas resulting in youth continuing "to leave their rural hometowns in increasing numbers." (Gabriel, 2006:34) Further, since economic investment in rural areas has been largely withdrawn, life in is often characterised by a lack of opportunity in general: low incomes, high unemployment and underemployment, poor quality of what employment there is (i.e., service jobs), lack of services (Pezzini, 2000:50; see also Pretty *et al.,* 2006 and White & Wyn, 2004) as well as the poor availability of affordable housing; all of which contribute to the propensity of youth to leave their hometowns. There is a simultaneous thrust to revitalise rural areas from the "bottom up" (Stockdale, 2004:168), unfortunately at a time when rural youth are leaving (Stockdale, 2004:170). Jentsch (2006) asserts that for youth scholars, these assessments are underpinned by an assumption that rural youth are disadvantaged vis-à-vis their urban counterparts and that if these problems were addressed at a policy level it would "contribute to the retention of youth in rural areas." (230)

Scholarship on rural to urban migration indicates the influential relationships among opportunities for education, income-earning opportunities, and rural out-migration. White & Wyn (2004) note that youth from "higher socioeconomic backgrounds were most likely to make the active choice to leave their rural area." (73) The high cost of education itself as well as the associated costs of room and board means that higher education is "beyond the reach of lower socioeconomic families." (White & Wyn, 2004:69) Rye & Blekesaune (2007) employ a class-based analysis of rural to urban youth migration in Norway to suggest that "the rural upper classes represent a more urban lifestyle that encourages and arranges for out-migration of their offspring" with youth 'naturally' choosing to leave for urban areas where educational and later employment options are more attractive (186).

Women tend to leave rural areas to pursue livelihood opportunities in urban areas more often than men. Young people alike face a shrinking rural job market but since women have "reduced chances of gaining apprenticeships," (Jones, 2004:211) they face a greater need to migrate to access educational and employment opportunities. Additionally, the educational requirements for jobs thought to be "traditionally" female, like teaching and nursing, also "require higher levels of schooling with the move to university-based training." (Jones, 2004:211) Both Orderud (1997) and Looker (1997) also found in their studies of young rural women and men that more women than men planned on pursuing post-secondary education, requiring them to leave their hometowns.

While the literature is slim, rural to urban youth migration in the post-socialist context mirrors that of the developed world. In the case of Russia, White (2007) notes that of youth who migrate to the cities "most often appear to go straight into higher education." (896) Considerations of gender prove to be important in Mongolia as well. Weidman & Bat-Erdene (2002) state that after Mongolia's transition to a market economy and the introduction of fees for boarding school, pastoralist parents were more likely to keep their boys at home to assist with herding. This has implications on post-secondary attendance with women comprising 60 and 70 percent of students in public and private universities, respectively; along with a 2:1 ratio of female to male graduate students (137). Further, *all* of the post-secondary institutions are concentrated in the capital of

Ulaanbaatar, meaning that everyone with post-secondary aspirations must leave their rural home to attain them.

Post-transition milieu

As of 2005, the date of this research, youth aged 16 to 25 are the first generation to come of age since Mongolia's economic transition in the early 1990s. Mongolia is a landlocked nation between Russia and China with a population of 2.65 million inhabitants. Of these, roughly half are pastoralists with the remainder living in urban areas (Weidman, 2001). The capital of Ulaanbaatar (UB) is home to approximately one third of Mongolia's total population, however unofficially the proportion is likely higher due to rapid growth from rural to urban migration (Mearns, 2004). Ulaanbaatar's pull is primarily from "the disparity in social and economic development between the capital city and rural areas" (MoSWL, 2004:107). Specifically, these factors include, among others, increased access to what is believed as better schools (Batbaatar *et al.*, 2005), access to jobs (push from lack of jobs in the rural areas) and people seeking a better life (MoSWL, 2004:106). Ulaanbaatar leads the country in "economic growth and educational and social services" (Dore & Nagpal, 2006:16) thus making it a more attractive place, especially for youth.

In 1990 Mongolia embarked on the adoption of a free market economy through tough economic and political restructuring[7] commonly known as 'shock therapy' with the assistance and guidance of the International Monetary Foundation (IMF) and the World Bank (Schmidt, 1995). The restructuring altered the fabric of Mongolia's social life, introducing the vagaries of market capitalism, such as poverty and unemployment[8], among others. In addition, literacy levels “[illegible]e been falling badly” (Demberel & Penn, 2006: 205) due to a host of reasons: the introduction of school fees[9], the disrepair of educational buildings along with the inability to pay for the heating of them (Batbaatar *et al.*, 2005), and the need for children to remain with the pastoral household to provide much needed labour (Batbaatar *et al.*, 2005; Demberel & Penn, 2006). As Mearns astutely notes, “the reform agenda remains far from complete…and is less tidy in practice than the notion of ‘transition’ implies” (2004:133).

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[7] Mongolia is still in the process of completing its monumental project of transforming its centrally-planned economy to one that is more decentralised. The impetus for this transformation arrived with the fall of the former Soviet Union, Mongolia's primary trading partner and provider of subsidies, as well as the dissolution of the socialist Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA).

Challenges faced by rural youth for livelihood attainment

The challenges faced by rural youth in Mongolia stem primarily from two sources: access to education and the continuing viability of pastoralism in the long term. During the transition, educational spending was slashed to meet the new economic targets. While these funding cuts affected everyone in Mongolia, rural families were the hardest hit. For example, the enrolment ratio for basic education (grades 1-8) went from 99% in 1990 to 89% in 1999 (Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe, 2006). Boys were more likely to either not go to school or drop out of school. As a result, Mongolia is one of the few countries in the world where females outstrip males in educational attainment and where, “the next generation is less educated than the parents’ generation.” (Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe, 2006:2) The following paragraph is illustrative of the impacts of state withdrawal from funding the educational system.

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[8] Gundsambuu (2002) argues that unemployment has always been part of socialist times in “hidden and subtle ways.” (142) However, he states that Mongolians are presently dealing with ‘structural unemployment’ since the transition to a market economy due to an imbalance between labour’s supply and demand, the fixed salary system, and the bureaucracy of employers.

[9] Although basic schooling is paid for by the government, fees are assessed for a place in the dormitory and food costs. Further, some schools are levying fees in order to make up the shortfall between their expenses and the amount the government pays (Batbaatar *et al.*, 2005).

> To meet the costs of education, food and dormitories for hundreds of thousands of children, the state spent lots of money. Since transition in 1990, the state has had to introduce charges. Parents whose children stay in dormitories have to pay for half of the food (food costs in Mongolia are very high, now amounting to half of the school budget), and for the other educational expenses other than tuition fees. They must also pay for tertiary education. This causes difficulties for families with many children and for poor families, and makes education not only less attractive, but in many cases impossible. (Demberel & Penn, 2006:200)

A second significant consequence of state withdrawal from full support of the educational system is that rural schools have fallen behind in their ability to provide the same level of quality and outcomes as that of their urban counterparts[10]. Not only do rural schools lack the funds that urban schools have access to, but more importantly, they lack access to key resources like technology, radio, television, periodicals and other study materials that are available in urban areas. This inequality of provision, according to Demberel and Penn, lead to "different outcomes for urban and rural children." (2006:200) Rural students are also falling behind due to the high cost of education, school closures as a result of falling enrolments, a lack of textbooks and the shortage of teachers (Batbaatar *et al.*, 2005).

While pastoralism has been a viable livelihood in Mongolia for generations, there is no guarantee that it will continue as it has in the past. In the period between collectivisation in the 1950s and the transition in the 1990s herding had been well supported by the government (Swift *et al.*, 1990:57). Mongolia's mining and agricultural sectors were also well supported because the Soviet Union was the primary purchaser of copper concentrate, wool, leather and meat exports (Schmidt, 1995). After the transition, the herds were privatized[11], the collectives were dissolved and government support was withdrawn in integral areas such as harvesting hay and fodder crops, assistance in moving herders' base camps, delivery of livestock products to urban markets and delivery of supplementary livestock feed to winter/spring pasture sites (Mearns, 1993:15). Humphrey and Sneath (1999) point out that in Mongolia, like Russia and China, "market-oriented policies…are creating new and divisive historical conditions for mobile pastoralism, in many places unfortunately threatening its continued existence as a viable economic practice." (1) Further, pastureland degradation and changing climactic conditions, possibly leading to the prevalence of *dzuds* ('environmental disasters' caused by drought, excessive snow fall or late spring which may result in significant livestock losses) also increase the risks borne by herders. The implication of these factors is that herding becomes a less attractive or viable livelihood option for youth to undertake, especially if they do not already have access to sufficient social capital and/or the financial means to mitigate these risks.

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[10] The educational attainment of Mongolian youth from 1940 to 1990 was nothing short of remarkable, boasting of an almost 100 percent literacy rate (Kratli & Dyer, 2006:21). Even more significant is the fact that rural children shared this literacy rate with their urban peers. This feat was largely accomplished due to the persistent effort of the Mongolian government to provide basic education for rural and pastoral children ages 8 to 14.

Filling the gap

In summary, little is known about the particular factors that influence the paths today's Mongolian youth take in their pursuit of livelihood. That youth are leaving their rural homes for the opportunities that only the urban areas can provide is certain. Youth in Mongolia today face a different climate in which to pursue livelihood than that of their parents. Education is only partially funded by government, and as a result, those who cannot pay the fees are unable to achieve their educational goals. Pastoralism is has changed with the dismantling of the collectivities and the questionable viability of the pasture lands to sustain the animals. This project seeks to add to the scholarship on Mongolian rural youth and their pursuit of livelihood in the context of these evolving economic, social and environmental changes.

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[11] The collectively owned herds were sold to individuals and families through a voucher or coupon system (Potkanski & Szynkiewicz, 1993). One of the consequences of this was the dismantling of the state-led collectives, or *negdel,* which invariably meant that herders bore the risks of herding individually rather than collectively (Demberel & Penn, 2006).

Study Design

In the fall 2006 a cross-sectional descriptive questionnaire study of all adult residents of a middle Gobi desert community, Delgertsogt *soum* (a rural administrative unit), was conducted. The questionnaire was designed to ask about occupation and herding activities; household economics; transportation and mobility; residence history and preference; perceptions of health; perceptions of community; and social support and networking. This report addresses results of the survey regarding expectations to pursue herding as a means of livelihood and aspirations for education and wage employment.

Methods

We examined data gathered for ages 16 – 25 from the survey conducted in October and November of 2005. This large-scale survey[12] resulted in an $n = 928$ of persons 16 to 55 years of age in Delgertsogt *Soum*. The survey was created specifically for the Mongolian pastoral economic context, based on the data obtained from a preliminary participatory rural appraisal (described in the next section) conducted in the community in the fall of 2005.

The single round population enumeration was conducted using a survey created by the University of Alberta research team in collaboration the National Centre for Health

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[12] The survey was designed for individual rather than household responses due to the nature of the concepts under scrutiny: social support, resilience and migration.

Development[13]. The survey was designed in Canada, revised in Mongolia, and then pretested in a *soum* distant from the intended study area. It was then revised again before being launched in Delgertsogt *Soum*.

The survey was carried out over a nine day period using 19 local people as enumerators. These enumerators were trained in a day long workshop on how to conduct the survey and research ethics. Respondents were either located in Delgertsogt's *Soum* Centre or lived in households scattered across the countryside. *Soum* Centre residents came to the community hall to be surveyed. In order to reach residents located in the countryside enumerators went by jeep or motorcycle, following maps provided by the *Soum* Governor's office that detailed the locations of the pastoralists' *gers* (portable felt houses). These maps were constructed the previous December during the annual animal census[14]. Youths attending school in Mandalgovi, the *Aimag* (province) Centre 25 km from the *soum* centre, were also surveyed by a team of enumerators who travelled there for a day. Each respondent was paid roughly $2 US[15] for completing the survey, a nominal payment for this context.

Sample

The total possible number of respondents was 1357, the number of registered residents of Delgertsogt *soum*. Mongolian citizens are registered according to area of residence. If people wish to move, they must seek approval to be registered in another community. This study collected a total of 928 completed questionnaires. The remaining 427 residents were not available to be surveyed either because they had already moved but had yet to register in another *soum* or because they were away at school, visiting relatives, conducting business in the city, etc. There were no refusals to the surveys. Our acknowledgement of the absent or recently moved residents suggests our response rate of 68.3 percent[16] is conservative.

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[13] The National Centre for Health Development is a semi-autonomous body reporting to the Ministry of Health. Its responsibilities include health surveillance, health promotion, health education, and health policy and management advice.

[14] Every December the *soum*'s governor's office conducts a census of all animals in the *soum*.

[15] Approximately $1.57 Euros in Oct 2006.

We report here on the youth cohort between the ages of 16 and 25. This age range was selected firstly because this group is either just finishing or has already finished their basic education. Secondly, youth from ages 16 to 25 are poised to continue on to high school, post-secondary school or pursue their expected livelihood. Older ages were not included in this analysis since people 26 years and older would have already embarked on their present livelihood and/or would have completed or almost completed their post-secondary education.

Pursuit of Livelihood: A Hypothesis of the Expectation to Herd

The impetus for this study arises from data collected with participatory rural appraisal methods[17] conducted in 2005 in Delgertsogt *Soum*. One of the themes that arose from this work was the priority, in the eyes of many parents and youth, for young people to go beyond basic schooling (grades 1-8) to complete high school and undertake post-secondary studies. Following from this is the ambivalence that herding parents felt about their own children continuing to herd. A second important theme was the opinion expressed by youth that there were not enough jobs in the *soum* and that the capital city of Ulaanbaatar held more promise for them (Laing *et al.*, 2005).

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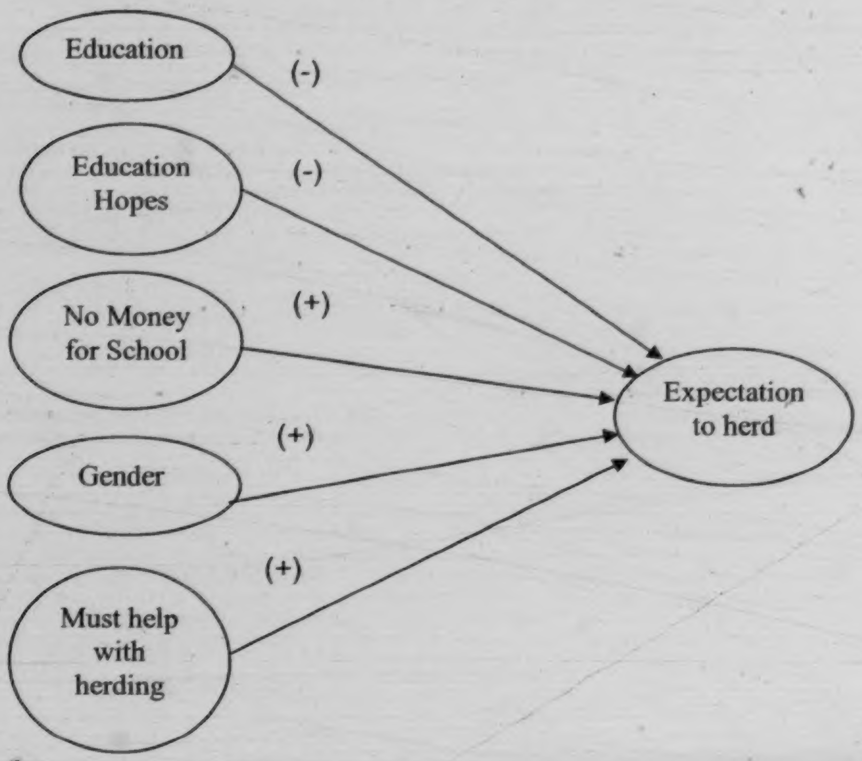
[16] Baruch (1999) reports an average response rate of 55.6 (standard deviation of 19.7) in a comparison of 141 papers which included 175 studies. There is no parameter estimate since the sample is non-random.

[17] Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) is an innovative form of data collection that comes out of participatory research (Maalim, 2006). It places emphasis on a team approach between those initiating the research and those involved as participants to come up with possible solutions to research questions. The process seeks to transcend the researcher-researched hierarchy to engender empowerment amongst rural peoples "enabling them to analyze their world and [could]…lead into their planning and action." (Chambers, 1994b: 1266; see also Chambers, 1994a)

A closer examination of survey data revealed interesting relationships between the youth's expectation to herd as a livelihood choice and five other variables: education attained, education hoped for, a lack of money as a barrier to educational attainment, gender and lastly, the need to help with herding as a barrier to educational attainment. Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesis that key factors vary with the expectation to herd with the following paragraphs explicating the significance of the variables for this study. See Table 1 for the descriptive statistics of these variables.

Figure 1: A Hypothesis of the Expectation to Herd



Variables

From the literature describing the transition from a command to a free market economy, it is hypothesized that *post-secondary educational goals* (education hopes) and *attainment* (education) will have a negative impact on youth's expectation to herd. This hypothesis is supported by Dasgupta (1988) who writes that "[m]obility is increased as members of the labor force acquire superior skills, professional training and education of all kinds." (37) Post-secondary attainment, in this case, is a push and pull factor away from traditional activities. Jobs for highly educated people tend to be in urban settings, thus in order to achieve these goals people must leave their communities. Research conducted in Canadian rural communities by Leavitt (1960) and Stone (1969) postulated that out-migration from rural communities was higher amongst those whose educational attainment was lower than average (Corbett, 2007:14). This example highlights the trend where people with less education are likely to leave their communities to access either more education or a wider range of employment options. Further, herders presently place a higher value on formal education for their children than on herding as a good livelihood. A report by the Open Society Forum (2004:111) stated that 43.4 percent of herders, when questioned about their children's future, replied they would educate their children versus 12.7 percent who said they would want them to take over their herds and become herders[18].

In addition to the two education variables, a *lack of money* for schooling signifies an important barrier to educational hopes and attainment, and possibly herding[19]. It is hypothesized that those youth who lack sufficient funds would most likely not pursue schooling (either secondary or post-secondary) and would be more likely to expect to pursue herding in conjunction with their families as they would not have enough funds to establish their own herd.

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[18] The rest of the responses are: 35 percent said that children should decide for themselves and 13.3 percent said that children should become farm owners.

[19] Herding is an expensive endeavour to undertake. In most cases youth are given animals and supplies from either parents or close relatives.

Gender is the fourth independent variable for our model. The literature revealed that males are more likely to be held back from schooling because their labour is needed to help with herding (Altansetseg, 2002; Demberel & Penn, 2006) and that females are becoming overrepresented in all forms of post-secondary education (Altansetseg, 2002; Batbaatar, *et al.*, 2005; Gundsambuu, 2002). Corbett (2007) states in his study of education and schooling in rural Nova Scotia that females are twice as likely as males to finish high school (94). It is therefore hypothesized that male youth are more likely to expect to pursue herding than female youth.

The last independent variable for the model is the necessity of youth to *help with herding*. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, some youth are required to remain with their families to assist with the herding of animals. This is more often expected of males than females. In our model, the necessity of youth to help with herding is believed to promote herding as a livelihood as well as present a barrier to educational attainment. It is hypothesized that youth who must help with herding are more likely to expect to pursue herding.

Three other independent variables were initially included in the model but were dropped upon final analysis since they proved to be insignificant. These variables are *income* (for the individual), *animal ownership* (proxy for income), youth's *marital status* and *number of children* borne by youth. Although these variables are usually significant in youth mobility studies, it may be that they are insignificant to our target population since the youth do not have much income outside of that which their parents provide[20], they do not have many animals, they are typically not married and they do not have large numbers of children. The singulate mean age at marriage[21] (SMAM) in 2004 of males is 25.7 years and women is 23.7 years, with a total fertility rate (TFR) of 2.3 (United Nations: 2004).

Table 1 : Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Measurements	N	Percent
Dependent variable: Youth 16-25			
Expect to herd			
All other occupations	0	112	66.3
Herding	1	57	33.7
Independent variables: Youth 16-25			
Education			
No education (Ref)	1	37	21.9
Grades 1-3	2	42	24.9
Grades 4-8	3	23	13.6
Grades 9-11	4	45	26.6
Post-secondary	5	22	13.0
Education Hoped For			
Have desired education (Ref)	1	25	14.8
Grades 4-8	2	61	36.1
Grades 9-11	3	16	9.5
Post-secondary	4	67	39.6
Barrier to Education: No money for schooling			
All other barriers	0	117	69.2
No Money for Schooling	1	52	30.8
Gender			
Females	0	89	52.7
Males	1	80	47.3
Barrier to Education: Must help with herding			
All other barriers	0	130	76.9
Must help with herding	1	39	23.1

Ref = Reference category

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[20] In addition, income did not vary widely enough in the community.

[21] SMAM is the average age of single life in years among those who marry before age 50.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 15.0) software. Initial analysis was done by examining the frequency distributions of the model's variables (see Table 1). Next, bivariate correlations between the dependent variable, *expect to herd*, and the five independent variables were run to determine if the relationships were significant. Logistic regression is used as the multivariate regression method since the dependent variable is dichotomous. Table 2 displays the results of the bivariate correlations and the multivariate regression model. The table contains the Pearson correlation coefficient from the bivariate correlations, indicating the strength and direction of the relationship; and the odds ratios, describing the net effects of the model's independent variables on the odds, or likelihood, that youth expect to herd.

Findings

For the age group, 16 to 25 (see Table 1), approximately one in three (34%) expect to herd as a livelihood option. This group had just slightly more females (53%) than males. Educational achievement was fairly evenly distributed between the five measures with the largest subset being those in the grades 9-11 category (27%) and the smallest being those in the post-secondary category (13%). Almost half of the sample hoped for post-secondary education (40%) with the minority (10%) hoping just to finish in the grades 9-11 category. In terms of barriers to education, one in three (31%) said that a lack of money was a barrier to educational goals along with just under one quarter of the sample (23%) who said that having to help with herding served as a barrier to their educational goals.

As indicated by the bivariate correlations the five independent variables show a significant relationship with youth's expectation to herd. Those who indicated a greater expectation to herd were males (r =0.326; p<0.01) who had attained grades 1-3 (r =0.256; p<0.01), had hoped to attain grades 4-8[22] (r =0...376; p<0.01) and had said that having to help with their family's herds served as a barrier to their educational goals (r =0.471; p<0.01). Those who did not expect to herd as a livelihood were youth who had attained grades 9-11 (r =-0.401; p<0.01) and post-secondary (r =-0.276; p<0.01), had hoped to attain post-secondary (r =-0.553; p<0.01) and had said that a lack of money for schooling (r =-0.394; p<0.01) served as a barrier to their educational goals.

Of the significant bivariate relationships only three remained significant in the multivariate model and, with the exception of one (post-secondary education), their levels of significance dropped. However, the independent variables acted upon the dependent variable as hypothesized and retained the directions found in the bivariate relationships. The loss of significance could be due to either the presence of a mediating variable (*gender*) or the confounding of two variables (*education* and *education hoped for*).

The 'odds ratio' shown in Table 2 indicates how likely youth are or are not expecting to herd, taking into effect the independent variables. As in ordinary least squares regression (OLS), the Beta coefficient of logistic regression is the value of the slope, indicating that the change in the dependent variable is equal to one unit of change in the independent variable. However, in logistic regression the exponential Beta (odds ratio) is used, interpreted as a change in the log odds ratio between the variable and its reference category rather than "an absolute change." (Miles & Shevlin, 2001:160)

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[22] In Mongolia students can terminate their schooling at grade 8.

Table 2 : Factors Affecting Youth's (ages 16-25) Expectation to Herd

Variables	Bivariate Correlation	Multivariate Model (odds ratio)
Education (Ref = no education)		
Grades 1-3	.256**	0.383
Grades 4-8	.009	0.319
Grades 9-11	-.401**	0.205
Post-Secondary	-.276**	0.000»
Education Hoped For (Ref = have desired education)		
Grades 4-8	.376**	0.330
Grades 9-11	.026	0.430
Post-Secondary	-.553**	0.046
Barrier to Education 1 (Ref = all other barriers)		
No money for education	-.394**	0.176*
Gender (Ref = females)		
Males	.326**	2.202
Barrier to Education 2 (Ref = all other barriers)		
Must help with herding	.471**	3.494*
Intercept		2.92
Model Chi-square		100.438**
Model degrees of freedom		10
-2 Log likelihood		115.616
Pseudo R^2 : Nagelkerke (%)		62.1
Correctly classified (%)		83.4
N		169

t-statistic *** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$ * = $p < 0.05$
» significant but unable to obtain an odds ratio; see Findings section below
Ref = reference category

According to the model, three variables were found to affect youth's expectation to herd: post-secondary education and the two barriers to youth's achievement of their educational goals: no money for education and the need to help the family with herding. An odds ratio, attesting to the likelihood of those with post-secondary education to expect to herd as compared to those without any education, could not be obtained due to the particular configuration of the data. Since no one who has post-secondary education expected to herd we cannot obtain a final estimate of an effect for that contrast[23]. In effect, the evidence for the effect is so strong that we cannot get a fixed estimate of it, because we are dividing the number by zero (Nichols, personal communication, 2008). However, we were able to obtain measure of significance for the effect (Chi-square 9.561; $p<0.0001$) with a likelihood ratio test (determining that this effect is zero in the population) by isolating the post-secondary education variable in a separate multivariate model (not shown). In terms of barriers to educational goals, those who reported that a lack of money was a barrier were 84 percent less likely (odds ratio=0.176; $p<0.05$) to expect to herd than those who experienced other barriers. The largest effect was found with youth who stated that needing to help with herding was a barrier to their educational goals. This group was almost three and a half times more likely to expect to herd than those who experienced other barriers.

In summary, the regression analysis confirmed that significant relationships exist between youth's expectation to herd and post-secondary education, a lack of money for achieving education goals and the need to help with herding as a barrier to attaining educational goals. The model is a good predictor of youth's expectation to herd for three reasons. Firstly, the explanatory power of the model is very strong (Chi-square=100.438; $p<0.001$). Secondly, the model was able to explain 62 percent of the variance of youth's expectation to herd (Nagelkerke Pseudo R square = 0.621). Lastly, the model's significant variables accurately predicted 83 percent of youth (Correctly classified = 83.4) who expected to herd.

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[23] A crosstab analysis of the dependent variable 'expect to herd' with 'post-secondary education' displayed the 22 persons with post-secondary education in the 'other occupations' cell and zero persons in the 'herding' cell. The strength of this finding cannot be understated.

After the multivariate analysis was completed it was important to check for both interaction effects and multicollinearity. Interaction effects are present when variables combine to "produce an effect beyond that of each variable alone." (Neuman, 2003:249) All of the independent variables were checked to see if there were any significant interactions between them by using regression analysis. The analysis revealed that there were no significant effects (not included here). Multicollinearity is when two or more independent variables correlate and obscure which of the two is the more important one in the regression equation (Miles & Shevlin, 2001). The check for multicollinearity determined a correlation between *education* and *education hoped for* (Pearson correlation coefficient 0.716; $p<0.01$). However, the decision was made to keep both variables since the variance explained by the model dropped (Nagelkerke Pseudo R square dropped from 0.621 to 0.597 when *education hoped for* was removed). Although the Nagelkerke Pseudo R square cannot be interpreted in the same way as R square in an OLS regression model[24] it can be "helpful in the model building stage as a statistic to evaluate competing models." (Hosmer & Lemeshow, 2000:167)

Discussion

At the beginning of this study it was hypothesized that gender, lacking funds for schooling and needing to help with herding would have a positive effect on youth's expectation to herd as a livelihood. Conversely, educational attainment and education aspirations were hypothesized to have a negative effect on youth's expectation to herd. The results of the logistic regression confirmed two variables of this hypothesis: that post-secondary education has a negative effect on youth's expectation to herd and the need to help with the family's herds as a barrier to educational goals has a positive effect. However, the variable, lack of funds for educational goals, acted negatively on youth's expectation to herd rather than positively as hypothesized. The following paragraphs discuss these findings individually.

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[24] Any R^2 in logistic regression is unable to assess goodness-of-fit since there can be no assumption of a normal distribution due to the dependent variable's dichotomous nature. Rather the R^2 is an "attempt to measure the strength of association." (Garson, n.d.)

The attainment of post-secondary education was confirmed to have a negative relationship to youth's expectation to take up herding. This effect was critically evident in the post-secondary subgroup, despite our inability to arrive at an odds ratio to explain the effect. This means that when youth attain post-secondary education they do not expect to herd at all. Advanced educational attainment precludes herding as an option for livelihood.

The first barrier to educational attainment, lacking funds for school, has a small but significant negative relationship to youth's expectation to take up herding. This means that youth who lack funds for schooling also do not expect to take up herding as a livelihood. This group of youth is very interesting because despite the fact they do not have the required funds to attain their educational goals they also do not expect to take up herding. This may be because they do not have access to animals, funds to purchase herd animals or someone to teach them herding skills (i.e., an apprenticeship). This group could be considerably vulnerable since they have neither money for their educational goals as a route to livelihood nor the ability (or desire) to take up herding.

The second barrier to educational attainment, the necessity to help with one's family's herd, has a large significant relationship to youth's expectation to take up herding. Youth were more likely to expect to herd if they reported that they had to help with the family's herds (the labor intensive lifestyle thus serving as a barrier to achieving their educational goals).

The two other hypothesized independent variables, gender and educational aspirations, lacked statistical significance in explaining youth's expectation to herd. However, gender and educational aspirations remain implicated in youth's expectation to herd in some manner[25], perhaps due to the particular aspects of gender and the nature of educational aspirations.

This analysis illustrates some of the different attributes of rural youth who expect to herd as their livelihood: they do not have post-secondary educational attainment and they report that the need to help with their family's herds constitutes a barrier to their educational attainment goals. Just as the data indicates who expects to herd, it also suggests those who do not expect to herd: they have attained post-secondary education and have no money for their educational goals. This mismatch has policy implications.

Conclusion

The findings affirm the observation that "one pattern emerges quite clearly: school is seen and used as an alternative to herding. Those who go to school stop herding and, wherever financially and/or logistically possible, those who stop herding go to school" (Kratli & Dyer, 2006:23). Those who expect to herd and have the means to herd along with those who have access to higher educational experiences may have their livelihood options secured. The group most interesting is youth who have neither option available to them. Further scholarship is needed to assess what livelihood options they are likely to pursue as well as how successful these options are in both the short and long term.

Mongolia's transition to the market economy brought a widening of the gap between the rich and poor (Mearns, 2004:108) and the results of this study demonstrate its effects on youth livelihood choices in a rural region. A group of youth has been identified who appear to have neither herding nor educational access as a means for livelihood pursuit. The lack of jobs in the *soum* is a significant problem for these youth since they will, in all probability, need to leave home to find employment. It is unknown at this point what this group will do to attain success in the changing Mongolian economic and employment landscape; however, occupying such a liminal and ambiguous place potentially increases their vulnerability. Mining operations have become central to the Mongolian economy (Farrington, 2005) and are expected to increase in the South Gobi (Brooke, 2003 & 2004), along with associated road construction (currently there is no paved road across the Gobi connecting Ulaanbaatar and China). However, competition for jobs will be fierce in urban areas where there are far more unskilled workers available than jobs.

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[25] We know this from the model: the variables retained their direction of influence even while losing statistical significance.

At another level, it would be prudent to ask what is to happen to rural communities when the youth seeking further education have left. As indicated by government reports, the quality of schooling is declining due to a lack of enrolment and the subsequent funding that it brings. This may propel more rural students and their families to move to Ulaanbaatar to access better quality schooling. Out-migration of those with financial means to do so could potentially cause the cycle to continue, leaving less and less government investment in rural schools, and declining capital to fund rural economic development initiatives. Further, these disparities leave gaps in rural students' knowledge. Many reported being ridiculed when attending classes in the cities because they were not performing at the same level as the urban students (Batbaatar *et al.*, 2005). This contributed to some of the children dropping out because of their belief that they were too far behind to catch up.

Conversely, there is the reality of heavy migration to Ulaanbaatar. The *ger* districts in UB are noted as chronically underfunded and underserviced, with people having to cope with a shortage of water and sewer services (MoSWL, 2004). Markets, medical centres and transportation networks in the city are often far away from the surrounding *ger* districts. The difficult living conditions coupled with the uncertainty of obtaining sufficient employment make for a precarious future for youth who go to Ulaanbaatar without a pre-established social network.

Rural to urban migration is a ubiquitous phenomenon in today's globalizing world, including both internal and international travel, for accessing employment and educational opportunities. That youth are participating in this phenomenon is not initially problematic since in most cases they must leave in order to obtain the valuable skills needed to procure a livelihood. The dilemma ensues when the youth fail to return to their home communities and as a result, reify the notion of 'brain drain' (Stockdale 2002). National, regional and local governments will need to address this gap in order to maintain the viability of rural areas, by enticing skilled workers to remain or return, and providing attention to those who lack resources to migrate to the city, but also cannot afford to herd.

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Chapter Three: Paper #2

'Moving to a Better Pasture': Youth Rural to Urban Migration in Mongolia

Today, the main difficulty facing the would-be migrant, itinerant trader, or pilgrim lies in working and saving for the plane or bus fare. The opening of continents to seasonal or permanent migration has made it possible for the most ambitious and the least privileged alike to pursue opportunity wherever it might be found, usually in far away cities, often across national boundaries. (Ronald Niezen, 2004:38)

And so spiritually at least we are all travelers. Or, as Michael Benedikt puts it, 'the very significance of geographical location at all scales begins to be questioned. We become nomads – who are always in touch.' But we are on the move also in another, deeper sense, whether or not we take to the roads or leap through the channels, and whether we like doing it or detest it. (Zygmunt Bauman, 1998:78)

(Target Journal – *Journal of Youth Studies*)

Abstract

This paper addresses the phenomenon of rural youth migration to urban areas for educational attainment. The study takes place in a rural community located in the northern Gobi desert and makes use of 13 in-depth interviews of youth and parents of youth conducted in October and November 2006. The perceptions of youth and parents of youth are utilized to offer an alternate conception of youth's motivation to leave than current theories which portray migrants as either objects of structural forces or opportunists maximizing their agency. Relevant structure-agency theoretical perspectives of Anthony Giddens, Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault and Ludwig Wittgenstein are applied to respondents' understanding of "seeking a better life," and thereby reproducing the social order.

A tale of two youths...

Chuluun and Oyunbileg are two typical teens[26] who live in a small pastoral community in the Mongolian countryside. Chuluun is almost 17 and is planning to leave the community for the capital city of Ulaanbaatar (UB) next year to look for work. His parents lost all their animals to a terrible *dzud* (weather disaster) five years before and have been working at temporary jobs ever since. As a result, the family does not have any money for him to undertake post-secondary education or to purchase animals of his own. Since Mongolia's transition from communism to capitalism in the early 1990s there are few jobs in the community because of the substantial government withdrawal of support jobs around herding. Although he expressed excitement about the possibilities the city will bring in terms of employment he expressed uncertainty how the future will unfold since there is very little money to help him get established.

For 15 year old Oyunbileg, the future is full of promise. She is the daughter of well-to-do herders who gained their wealth when the Mongolian state sold off its animal holdings to citizens during the transition. Her parents herd more than 2 000 animals and this affords the family a comfortable lifestyle with considerable disposable income. Like Chuluun, Oyunbileg's future also lies in Ulaanbaatar. Even though she could take up herding, she knows that herding is a hard, labour-intensive life that is continually confronted by the risk of *dzuds* as well as the threat of pastureland degradation from increasing desertification in the steppes and savannah surrounding her community. Instead, she will finish her secondary education in one of UB's better private schools before going to a good university there. She is planning on becoming a doctor so that she can help rural Mongolians have better access to healthcare. Oyunbileg expresses excitement about the different experiences city life will bring even if she will miss her family and her home in the countryside.

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[26] While Chuluun and Oyunbileg's stories are fictional they illustrate realities confronting many Mongolian youth today.

Chuluun and Oyunbileg are two typical Mongolian teens – or are they? Chuluun's path seems already shaped by economic circumstances; while Oyunbileg appears poised to take advantage of the best Mongolian society has to offer. Since these teens and their respective stories can be both located on the continuum of all possible futures for Mongolian youth, how best can we understand them in a way that avoids reducing their actions to either determinism or opportunism? In other words, how best can we understand the place of youth migration vis-à-vis the continuum that is Mongolian society today?

Youth Exodus

So profound is the phenomenon of migration of rural youth to urban centres it has garnered the name 'youth exodus' in popular media (Eastern Daily Press 24, 2007; Greater Halifax Partnership, 2007; News Wales, 2005; BBC News, 2002). According to these sources the primary forces pushing youth out of rural areas are a general lack of opportunities, unemployment, high housing costs and in some cases, a culture that does not take youth involvement seriously (Malatest & Assoc., 2002:19; see also Asher, 2006). Bemoaned is the loss of 'the best and the brightest' with the concurrent recognition that this leaving contributes to the further impoverishment of opportunities for the youth who remain, resulting in a perpetuation of the cycle.

Youth are leaving rural areas to take advantage of the opportunities that are found primarily in urban areas. Globalization has paved the way for people in general, and youth in particular, to "pursue opportunity wherever it may be found" (Niezen, 2004: 38). Pursuit of opportunity is often matched by an equal determination to be successful in their endeavors to leave home, "irrespective of the experiences endured", since returning is "often deemed as to have failed." (Stockdale, 2004:188) Thus youth are not only leaving rural areas due to a lack of opportunity, but are also actively seeking new experiences in the context of greater mobility, desires for adventure, and expression of self through travel and discovery.

On one level, youth are an important group to study merely because the transition from dependence on one's guardians to oneself is a revealing part of the life course. On another, it is a cogent way to understand the reproduction of society, since it is a period that illuminates the convergence of institutional structures and human agency; life background and choices for one's future. Not only are youth at a juncture where they *choose* their future they are also *enmeshed* in the particular life circumstances that have shaped their lives, bringing both to bear on their future's unfolding. This particular junction in the life course occupies not just one time point but many. However, current constructions of rural youth migrants do not provide a convincing conception of youth as reproducers of society since they rely on either side of a dualism[27]: youth can be agents of action in their lives or can have their life choices constrained by structural conditions, but they cannot be both. Typical constructions of youth migration tend to emphasize youth who leave rural communities as either opportunistic social agents or as objects of structural forces are simplistic glosses on how youth participate in the reproduction of society.

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[27] Dualism implies a fundamental distinction between two kinds of 'things' where each cannot be reduced to the other. In sociology, one dualism is between individual agency and the structural determination of social outcomes. Currently advanced is the notion of a 'duality of forms' where "there exists a dialectical interaction between the two kinds of 'thing'" without sustaining a claim that either are irreducible (Jary & Jary, 2000:167).

This study examines the perceptions of rural Mongolian youth around their future livelihood plans. These youth are poised to leave their homes in the Gobi desert to further their education in the capital of Ulaanbaatar. The decision to leave is based primarily on a lack of education and employment opportunities in their own community as well as those in the surrounding area. These decisions are largely supported by parents of youth who are cognizant that opportunities for their children lie elsewhere. However, some community members are concerned that youth are opting for education in UB rather than entering into, or staying with, the traditional practice of animal husbandry[28] (Laing *et al*, 2005). We offer an alternate understanding, by examining youth's perceptions, of their motivations for leaving in a way that moves beyond the dualism of youth as hostages of structural determination or as opportunists.

Situating the Study

Three important areas of scholarship are employed to guide and inform this study. The first describes the post-socialist milieu that constitutes the lives of Mongolian rural youth today; the second sets forth the relevance of structure and agency theory for the reproduction of society; and the third examines the current rural to urban migration literature on youth.

Rural youth in post-socialist Mongolia

A distinguishing feature of contemporary Mongolia is its economic and political transformation from socialism to capitalism starting in the early 1990s. After struggling with 'shock therapy' style economic restructuring, increased business and education opportunities have developed in the urban areas, primarily in the capital of Ulaanbaatar (Dore & Nagpal, 2006). Youth are now migrating to these centres since students there have access to the benefits found in urban zones, which run the gamut from better teachers to computer and technological education to lower prices for goods. However, with youth leaving the rural *soums* (rural village administrative units) to undertake schooling in the capital, some rural schools are threatened with closure, leaving students to travel to a neighbouring *soum* for schooling (Batbaatar *et al*, 2005).

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[28] Animal husbandry is also known as pastoralism or herding. These terms will be used interchangeably throughout this paper.

Much of the migration from rural to urban areas centres around the theme of attaining "a better life". This belief has been found in literature describing the hopes of many migrants of developing nations. In two studies, *Looking for a Better Life: Latinos in Georgia* (2000) and "'To Seek a Better Life': the Implications of Migration from Mozambique to Tanganyika..." (1984), migration is construed as the best option for escaping oppressive conditions in the natal country. In two Tanzanian studies, migration to town is done in the hopes of finding a better life there. The first describes the "quest for personal well-being" through the search for making ends meet, finding jobs, vocational and educational training or better housing is "an internalized obligation to contribute to the common good" (von Trail, 1992:224). The second describes how, for Tanzanian women, migration is both a route to "a better life" and a way to help their families back home (Knippel, 1997:218). In Mongolia, a government report on rural to urban child migration, Batbaatar *et al* (2005) noted that parents from a focus group said they migrated to UB as a way to improve their lives and provide a good place for their children to grow up (26).

While this may be a significant motivation in the minds of rural parents and youth who migrate, a better life may not necessarily concur with a move to an urban area like Ulaanbaatar. The resources one begins with differentially impacts the access one has to 'a better life' after the move; those who have more resources generally do better. Batbaatar *et al* (2005) note that for a quarter of the migrants "life gets more difficult after migration. Of those who can move, the better off, with relatives in urban areas and more resources, tend to do better from migration." (54) However, these authors also noted that if the migrants came from areas of decline, their "lives and livelihoods now seem to be better than if they had stayed, and they arguably have a greater chance of further improvement." (ibid)

Missing from the literature on the search for 'a better life' via migration is how this notion relates to the society as a whole. Beyond the immediate prospects that it engenders for the people migrating, what does it 'do' for Mongolian society? This study fills this gap by examining the productive relationship of youth migration to the reproduction of Mongolian society as a whole. In order to examine this link it is important to first explicate the current sociological theorizing on how societies are reproduced.

Structure and agency

Theories of structure and agency constitute an important body of scholarly literature in contemporary sociology. Indeed, many sociologists assert that social theory's purpose is to "reconcile these two distinct elements" (Harrington, 2005:216). Structures are those elements of social life that shape and direct our lives and are generally beyond the ability of the average person to alter them. Charles Lemert states that "structures organize some sets of things because they lend them at least a minor degree of permanence." (2002:117) Examples of structures are the legal system, the institution of marriage, the market or socioeconomic class. Agency, conversely, speaks of human action, or the ability of "actors to operate independently of the determining constraints of social structural." (Jary & Jary, 2000: 9) It refers to the notion that despite the fact that individuals are constrained by forces and institutions beyond their control, they "are capable of choosing alternative courses of action." (Harrington, 2005:215)

Three theorists stand out in the body of structure and agency literature: Anthony Giddens, Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault. Due to space considerations we are unable to completely explicate the body of their work but will briefly illustrate the tenets of their thinking in the following paragraphs [for a more thorough analysis of Giddens, see Loyal (2003); for Bourdieu, see Jenkins (2002); for Foucault, see May (2006)].

Giddens' structuration theory seeks to reconcile the divide between the objectivism of the structural functionalism of Talcott Parsons and the subjectivism of symbolic interactionism of Erving Goffman and Harold Garfinkel. This theory "is designed to explain the reproduction of institutional orders through the knowledgeable agency of individuals." (King, 2005:218) There are four core features to the theory: tacit knowledge, system, structuration and structure. *Tacit knowledge* is knowledge that individuals possess but is largely invisible unless it is breached. It is those "shared meanings which coordinate individual action and allow individuals to interact in mutually acceptable and predictable ways." (ibid:219) An example of this would be grammar in language. It is largely invisible until someone makes a mistake. The *system* refers to a society's major institutions, like its legal or educational system; its economy and its class structure. *Structuration* refers to the process by which individuals reproduce these systems by way of their actions and activities. Lastly, *structure* is the most crucial: it "refers to the rules and resources which exist only when they are employed in social practice" and as such is the mechanism by which the social system as a whole is reproduced (Giddens, 1984: 25). Giddens goes one step further to imagine structure as a *duality*. Structure is both the medium and the outcome of social action (King, 2005). Simply put, structure is like grammar, when one uses correct grammar in speech, one is contributing to the reproduction of the English language as a whole. As people act they reproduce the entire order of social rules. Structure "underpins social practice" (ibid: 220) and as such imposes a relatively ordered and meaningful framework.

Bourdieu also sought to find a middle way between the objectivist tendencies of Claude Lévi-Strauss' structuralist theory and the subjectivist philosophy of phenomenology, hermeneutics and the existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre (ibid). Bourdieu considers social actors to be akin to virtuosos in the 'playing' of everyday life. People know the social rules so well they need not consult them whilst in the midst of 'play' but can improvise them so long as they remain acceptable to the group at large. Actors or agents conduct themselves "within a fluid context of structure, marked by group expectations, norms of acceptable practice, sanctions, and relations of power." (ibid: 222) There are three core concepts to Bourdieu's social theory: habitus, the field and cultural capital. For Bourdieu, *habitus* is the merging of agency and structure in that individuals *do* have agency but the kinds they have are already prescribed by the culture they are in. Further, habitus "comprises perceptual structures and embodied dispositions which organize the way individuals see the world and act in it." (ibid) Structures like class and other objective social positions are internalized; as a result it governs an individual's tastes or conduct. Habitus thus enables the reproduction of social structure by "imposing certain dispositions on individuals." (ibid: 223) The *field* is the wider social context upon which habitus is played out. It refers to the "structure of social relations" where an individual is located (ibid). This structure both pre-exists, and is independent of, individuals as well as determines the kinds of struggles they will encounter. Habitus is central to the field for it "links individuals to their position in the field and ensures that they reproduce it by acting in appropriate ways." (ibid) A pertinent example to this is the noted class antagonism between so-called white and blue collar workers (Southern, 2000). Objective factors like income and education differentiate these two groups but so too do things like spending habits (King, 2005:223). Lastly, *cultural capital* operates somewhat as a foil for the economic determinism of the relationship between habitus and the field. A person can gain cultural capital that belies their economic position. Bourdieu gave the example of intellectuals and artists as those individuals who may not have a large income but have a "commitment to difficult and time-consuming cultural forms." (ibid:224). Artists and intellectuals are able to attain a level of refinement that may not be available to the business person or executive simply because the latter two must work so much. Habitus thus conceived promotes the notion of social hierarchy with a twist: economic capital does not necessarily trump cultural capital; rather, it is a continual struggle between the two.

Like Bourdieu, Foucault's theorizing was done in relation to the then current scholarship on structuralism, phenomenology and hermeneutics. He sought first to understand the historical basis of knowledge and then how human beings became "subjects of particular kinds of knowledge and practice." (Ashenden, 2005:209) While Foucault's work does not explicitly deal with how 'structures' and 'human agency' relate, his work is useful since his theorizing cuts across 'reality' in a new way – reality constituting that of institutions, classes, cultures, ideas, ideologies, beliefs and practices

(Rabinow & Rose, 1994). Central to his work is the concept of discourse. *Discourse* refers to underlying principles that structure the production of knowledge in any particular field or area. It is the guidelines by which empirical statements are made and make sense (King, 2004:44). The significance of discourse goes far further than merely organizing knowledge. Rather "discourses are constitutive of the reality in which humans live, determining human perception and practice." (ibid) Foucault's most pertinent examples of this are the bodies of knowledge which delineate how madness, criminality and sexuality are to be understood as well as their objects: the madman, the criminal and the sexual deviant. He also links the creation of knowledge to regimes of power. In other words, the "ki[illegible]s of knowledge which emerge at any particular historical period facilitate the development of a specific political order." (ibid:46) Further, the relationship of knowledge to power is one of indispensability. Knowledge is the very means by which social reality is brought into being since the "particular ways in which people and groups are defined in any age constitutes their very existence." (ibid) For the most part discourses are monolithic. Even when new discourses come into being, created from the breach between conflicting older ones, they still arise to structure the social reality of human beings. However, Anthony King (2005) argues that it is possible to observe "an alternative, liberated social existence" in the interstices of Foucault's work, however fleetingly (48). For Foucault this liberation consists of "unfettered fulfillment of personal desire." (ibid) Social existence, conceived of in this way, is authentic because it is "uncommitted and unrationalised expression, free of all discourse and institutional interference." (ibid:49) Nevertheless this liberation is solitary and personal: individuals "free themselves of the unifying shackles of the modern episteme [paradigm] and assert random and de-centred aspects of their character." (ibid) Akin to agency, this conception of personal liberation allows for some measure of acting in the world that is not already structured by discourse.

This body of theoretical work seeks to explain how society is reproduced: the ways in which seemingly 'dead' structures carry on generation after generation through the actions of 'lively' people (Lemert, 2002). Through this lens we can view the actions of youth migrants as reproducing society in specific ways: the exodus from rural areas, the trend to pursue post-secondary education and the belief that the city is the best place to be to secure a future. The next section's description of the current literature on the migration of youth from rural to urban areas will further illustrate how youth are implicated in reproducing their society.

Rural to urban migration of youth

Rural to urban migration is pervasive amongst youth of both industrialized and post-socialist nations (Glendinning et al, 2004; Jones, 2004; Stockdale, 2004; Florinskaia & Roshchina, 2006; Gabriel, 2006; White, 2007). A persistent theme is the lack of opportunities available in rural areas and the concurrent need to acquire the skills that would allow youth to become contributing members of the society; most often found in urban areas. In post-socialist nations the transition from planned to market economy has meant a fundamental transformation in the viability of rural areas to meet the needs and aspirations of youth. Similarly, rural youth in other developing nations are leaving and while they hope to return, they doubt they will be able to. A study by Glendinning *et al* (2004) summarized what is common in much of the literature on rural youth migration: that in cities such as Siberia's Novosibirsk there is the draw of "images of a 'modern' life and the possibilities offered by the city, despite the risks and uncertainties." (45; see also Florinskaia & Roshchina, 2006)

The persistent theme of youth leaving due to a lack of opportunity is buttressed by the simultaneous thrust to repopulate rural areas by finding ways to encourage youth to stay. While this is a befitting aim for rural areas, overarching practices are impeding this effort. For example, Stockdale argues that the determination to succeed in the new host city is what rural areas need most but that this determination "is also the very characteristic that makes it difficult to return to declining rural communities that possess few employment opportunities." (2004: 188) In another study Ley *et al* (1996) found that rural students' future career and educational plans were spoken of with "relative certainty" by parents, teachers and the students themselves. Uncertainty revolved around where they would eventually live and to what degree community involvement would play in their futures. More pointedly, the authors argued that if "rural communities are hinging their future on the leadership and activism of local youth, it is not reflected in the perceptions of rural students, parents and teachers." (139) In other words, youth were socialized into an atmosphere that already entailed their leaving.

How youth are conceived, as either 'leavers' or 'stayers', has implications on how their lives will unfold. In *Leaving Home* (1995) Gil Jones, writing in the context of urban Scotland, states that young people tend to be construed in "political and media rhetoric according to a series of stereotypes" which are almost always negative (6). This statement is illustrative of how youth can be conceived by discourse in a society. Recall earlier the media outcry of 'youth exodus' which, as an active component of discourse, shapes the kinds of social realities youth will have available to them. In a later study Jones concludes that "some children are socialised by their communities and families into migration behaviour in their young adulthood." (1999:20) More tellingly, in an Atlantic Canada study Michael Corbett (2007) makes the argument that it is the school 'drop-outs' who stay and contribute to their rural community. He argues that the school system "has been essentially training to get people out of the outports [rural coastal communities]." (31) Youth are constructed as the key to maintaining the vitality of rural communities but paradoxically they will eventually need to leave in order to remain in alignment with the societal notions of success: education and secure employment.

This phenomenon is no less true in Mongolia where youth are leaving their rural communities for the capital of Ulaanbaatar. Rural residents are concerned about the further impact of migration will have on their communities and the continuing viability of the herding culture. The remainder of the paper focuses on the study itself: the design, sample, findings, discussion and lastly, conclusions and implications for further research.

Background

The study was conducted in the north Gobi Desert, about a five hour drive (250 km) south from the capital of Ulaanbaatar. The community was chosen collaboratively with the Mongolian partners, the National Centre for Health Development, in a larger Canadian Institute of Health Research project on social determinants of health. Delgertsogt is primarily a herding community in which 25 percent of the 1357 people of this rural administrative unit live in the village center, called a "*soum*" and the remaining live in the countryside, moving twice or three times a year to situate themselves in viable grazing areas for their goats (raised for cashmere wool), sheep (key source of food), cows, horses and Bactrian camels. The community has unpaved road access to Ulaanbaatar and Mandalgovi (approximately 45 minutes drive), the provincial capital. There are few businesses in Delgertsogt, and most of those who are employed run the local government, teach at the school (which boards children of herding parents) for grades kindergarten through grade eight, or work at the local hospital (a clinic).

Study Design

In September and October of 2006 thirteen semi-structured interviews were carried out over ten days in Delgertsogt and Mandalgovi, where many of the students from Delgertsogt were boarded for high school. Interview questions were constructed with our Mongolian health professional partners. The questions sought to elicit information on the everyday realities of Mongolian youth, especially acknowledging that they were about to finish school and take the next step on their journey to adulthood. Initial open ended questions focused on the participation of youth in Mongolian and Gobi culture, and how they identified with their local herding culture, while subsequent questions focused on life goals and pathways to reach them. The inclusion of parents was critical due to the central role they play in the lives of the youth. The life courses of the youths could be impacted by both the parents' world-views and the decisions parents made for their children, such as education in the city, following a herding livelihood, or placing youth at relatives' homes in urban areas for schooling.

Face-to-face interviews were possible with the help of two Mongolian translators who initially helped craft the questions, who understand the work given their health professional background (MSc level or higher in public health or medicine). The interviews were approximately 45 minutes in length and carried out in a room located in the mayor's office building[29] or in a school dorm room in Mandalgovi. Both translators were thoroughly briefed on the purpose of the research and the manner in which the interviews were to be conducted. The Canadian and Mongolian researcher were present for each interview, with the questions first asked in English, translated to the respondent in Mongolian, and then the Mongolian response was translated back to English. Additionally, interviews were recorded and transcribed later in the evening, in English, so that checks in translation could be discussed post-hoc by two Mongolian participants and two Canadian investigators. The interviews were analyzed with the assistance of the N*Vivo qualitative software program.

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[29] This location was selected because it was away from respondents' homes and other distractions; it was also private and convenient.

Sample

The data for this paper were obtained primarily from 13 interviews of youth and parents of youth. Given the exploratory nature of this work where both parents and youth were interviewed, and the importance of in-depth discussions around multiple influences on expectations of youth and choices for youth, a small number of interviews are deemed adequate to provide rich contextual detail and theoretical leads (Patton, 2002:244). Further, Ambert *et al* (1995) state that if the purpose is to generalize to theory then the "sample may be rather small." (885) Supporting data were taken from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire enumeration[30]. All respondents were recruited by the Delgertsogt government social worker who was asked to select people who were of varying ages and socio-economic levels and not related to each other.[31] The purpose of speaking to unrelated individuals was in order to obtain as much diversity of responses as possible. Youth respondents ranged in age from 16 to 20 and parents' ages were from 27 to 50. Six of the youths lived in the *soum* centre with the seventh residing in the countryside. Five of the parents also lived in the *soum* centre with the sixth living in the countryside.

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[30] The population enumeration yielded 928 completed surveys. Although the team obtained near 100 percent response from the population available with no refusals, the final response rate was 68.3 percent due to the remainder being physically unavailable. These residents had most likely moved but not yet registered in their new areas.

[31] The final tally of respondents did include a pair of relations: a father and son. The son was recruited by the social worker but the father was recruited by the interview team when the respondent who had been scheduled failed to attend.

One of the shortcomings of this study is that it cannot be generalized to the population since the interview team did not reach a saturation of responses. As a result this study is exploratory in nature, the first forays into a heretofore uninvestigated phenomenon. A second shortcoming is the necessity of a translator to conduct the interviews. It is possible that this truncated the interview and as a result they were not as fruitful as if both interviewer and respondent were fluent in the same language. Future studies would address both shortcomings by achieving saturation as well as conducting the interviews in solely in Mongolian.

Findings

There were six salient themes arising from the analysis of interview data; three from the youth and three from parents of youth. Post-secondary education figured prominently for both and so formed an overlapping theme. They are listed separately so as to illustrate how the two groups are expressing the theme. For brevity the discussion will only focus on those responses that illuminate the motivation around youth's plans for their education and future livelihood and parent's plans for their children.

Themes arising from interviews with Delgertsogt youth

Future paths: education in the city preferred to herding in the *soum*

All but one of the youths interviewed had concrete plans to go to Ulaanbaatar for schooling once their basic or high school education had been completed. Those who were heading to the city were planning to stay with relatives while attending school.

Q: Why do you want to go to school in UB?
*R: The choices are better in UB and there is only one college at the aimag [*provincial*] centre.*
Q: What are good things about being in UB?
R: The quality of schooling is better. I can meet many other teens of my age...
Q: What are challenges of living in UB? Pocket money, accommodations or jobs?
R: I think my parents can support me financially and I do not think I will stay a long time with relatives. Eventually, I will have good friends and try to live independently. Maybe it will be difficult.

- Lhkagva[32], 16 year old middle-income male; parents are herders but Lhkagva lives in the *soum* centre with his grandfather.

In the questionnaire portion of the research project one third of the youth respondents said they would not return to the *soum* upon the completion of their education[33]. The following quotes represent the answers youth gave when asked why they would not return.

Survey # 194: *Probably there are more opportunities to find work in the cities.*

Survey # 656: *There are good opportunities in urban areas.*

Recall that all but one of the youths had planned on pursuing post-secondary education in Ulaanbaatar. The following quote is from a young woman who had already attended trade school in the "*aimag*" (province) centre of Mandalgovi and had attained her cooking certification.

Q: *Could you do cooking or do you want to be a herder?*
R: *If I can find a job I can work as a cook...If I can't, I will be a herder.*
Q: *What would you prefer?*
R: *If possible, both, but herding is more beneficial for our lives...*
Q: *Is it possible for you to take more schooling after your baby has grown older?*
R: *If I have opportunity for schooling, I will continue my education.*

- Tuya, 20 year old low-income female; married with one child

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[32] All of the respondents have been given pseudonyms.
[33] Question 13 'Regardless of what education you receive, would you come back to the *soum* to live?' Responses were 32.8 percent 'no', 50.6 percent 'yes' and 16.6 percent 'depends'; n = 253.

Although currently unemployed due to being a stay-at-home mother she expressed that she would prefer to merge cooking and herding. Further, Tuya's post-secondary education may not end with the cooking training since she indicated that she would be willing to pursue future studies if the opportunity presents itself. For these particular young people it appears that education is firstly, an immediate means for pursuing livelihood goals and secondly, a means by which youth can imagine future opportunity.

The flip-side of these youth's plans to take post-secondary education is that none of them, save Tuya (and for her only as a fall-back plan) intend on becoming herders. This is significant considering that all of these youth have either immediate or extended familial connections to herding, making it an available livelihood option. However, this finding does not mean that herding ignored as a livelihood option for other youth. Some of the respondents spoke of family or friends who planned to take up herding or had already done so. These youth chose herding because they felt it suited them or because their help was needed for their family's herds. Our group is distinctive because none of them planned to pursue herding even though it remained a viable option for them.

Education and herding are seemingly two sides of a coin: if youth choose one by default they refrain from the other. The anomalous one here is Tuya: hers is an interesting situation where she has post-secondary training but since she chose to remain in the *soum* she has had difficulty finding work in her chosen field and may need to consider herding as a second livelihood choice.

Primed to migrate: people leave to pursue opportunities elsewhere

According to the youth three salient reasons explained why people left the *soum*: in order to get jobs, for their children's education and to improve their lives. Youth spoke about these reasons in such a manner as to suggest that people had no choice but to leave.

In other words, migrants were not opportunists, leaving simply because the city held the promise of more affluence.

> Q: *Many people have left Delgertsogt. Is it because they have to or because they want to?*
> R: *Because they have to or for improving their living conditions. Living conditions are low in the soum center. That's why people are looking for a better life.*
> Q: *Then do you think it's bad for the soum's future?*
> R: *Of course it's bad...*
> Q: *What kinds of opportunities are available to people who have moved?*
> R: *In the soum center there are no jobs. That is the main reason for moving.*

- Tulga, 18 year old middle-income male; going to UB for post-secondary education

Youth's survey responses as to why they would not return also spoke to the *soum's* limitations.

> Survey # 157: *Living conditions in the soum are still poor.*
>
> Survey # 677: *There are no job placements and the quality of life is poor in countryside.*
>
> Survey # 816: *In the areas we live, it is hard to find professional jobs.*

These youth recognized that people were leaving because access to the kind of life they were seeking was not available to them in the *soum*.

Life is good/better in Ulaanbaatar

This theme emerged throughout the interviews, albeit not in response to a specific question. Most, but not all, of the youth offered their opinions and impressions of the superiority of the city in comparison to their home *soum*. A minority spoke about the city in negative terms finding it crowded and busy. Overwhelmingly, youth opined that the city held more opportunities: easy access to the market, lower prices for goods, better educational opportunities (teachers, schools and curriculum) as well as more entertainment venues. Ariun's comments echo those made by the other youths interviewed:

> *I think here [soum* centre*], and maybe in the countryside, kids are rude. I expect Ulaanbaatar's children are more polite. But I heard that too many children are in one class and it's a little bit difficult. I only visited UB once so I don't know much about it... Also here in the countryside, there is too much disturbance during the class. Students are playing and moving; it's difficult to understand the lesson...In the aimag center it was not like that and I expect in the city it's nicer.*

- Ariun, 16 year old low-income female, is finishing school in the *soum* centre before going onto UB for high school and post-secondary.

Ariun recognized a difference between classrooms in the *soum* and *aimag* centres and extends that difference to Ulaanbaatar also: things and people in UB are 'nicer' and 'more polite' than her home *soum*. The following two comments are again from the survey question asking youth why they will not return to their home *soum*.

> Survey # 271: *I am fulfilling my life's dream of having a good life and witnessing progress in society [by going to the city].*
>
> Survey # 772: *There is greater opportunity for comfortable living in Ulaanbaatar.*

Both respondents speak to kinds of non-material benefits that urban life holds. More than just an access port to jobs and education opportunities, UB offers greater *lifestyle* opportunities.

When pressed to discuss the less positive aspects of life in the city, these youth acknowledged that life in UB has its perilous aspects. Youth observed that life can become very bad for people if they cannot find accommodations, jobs or if they do not have friends or family in the city to rely on. Other examples were the high cost of travel to UB, overcrowding in the classrooms, always needing cash, and petty thievery. We now turn to the findings generated from interviews with parents of youth to illustrate how parents may help shape their children's future livelihood paths.

Themes arising from interviews with Delgertsogt parents of youth

Future paths: professions, not pastoralism

All of the parents interviewed had planned to educate their children so that they could obtain a profession of some type. None of them currently have any children who herded nor did they ever plan to have their children herd. One mother said that her youngest child was talking about becoming a herder but that she did not think it would come to pass.

> *I just prepared them to get more education instead of filling their stomachs [merely focusing on satisfying material needs]. It means I spent more time and money for their education.*
>
> - Bold, 50 year old middle-income father of five

> Q: *What kind of education should she have?*
> R: *I haven't yet decided on what profession, only that I know she should get a profession...*
> Q: *Do you think she will become a herder too?*
> R: *No, I don't want that.*
>
> - Ganbold, 28 year old middle-income father of one

One person from the survey study observed the following about parents' behaviour vis-à-vis the continuation of herding into the future[34]:

> Survey # 815: *Nowadays parents tend to send their children to study. They pay more attention to children's education.*

These parents have committed and continue to commit considerable resources to ensure that their children will continue through to post-secondary schooling. In the case of Bold, only his last child remains, attending school at the aimag centre, while the rest all live in UB and are "doing fine". At times his children have lived together providing familial support and making it much easier to adapt to city life. Ganbold's daughter is still very young, only eight years old, but his plans for her constitute a profession rather than herding.

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[34] Question 26 'Please rate your agreement with this statement…"Herding will continue for the next generation as it does today in this soum region." Respondents who disagreed with the statement were then asked to indicate why they answered as they did. This person disagreed with the statement.

'All roads lead to Ulaanbaatar'

All of the children of parents interviewed were either already in Ulaanbaatar or were scheduled to go there. One mother said that her children all left because there were better job opportunities there. Of the children who were still enrolled in school in the *soum* centre, these parents had already planned their move to UB so that their children could complete their secondary education there.

> R: *My two oldest boys are students studying in UB city. One is studying at Ulaanbaatar University, another one is studying in the University of Industry and Art. The youngest one is studying in the soum center.*
> Q: *Did they go to school in the aimag center or did they go directly to the city?*
> R: *No they had studied here in the soum center. My oldest son completed high school in UB city.*
> Q: *Why did you choose to go directly to UB city instead of to the aimag center?*
> R: *All my relatives live in UB city, that's why I sent them there. None of my relatives are in the aimag center. Also, the education is much better in the city.*

- Khandaa, 40 year old low-income level mother of three

Despite the fact that schooling their children in UB was their first choice, parents did so at significant cost to themselves both emotionally and financially. Parents spoke of the difficulties encountered with having their children away at school: the significant distance and cost of travel means less frequent visits, the children's homesickness is hard on everyone, if there are no relatives for the children to stay with then obtaining other accommodations can be difficult and expensive, criminal activity in the city is a concern and not to be underestimated, and lastly the over-crowding of classrooms with the high costs of supporting the children (tuition, study materials, accommodation and food) all make the practice of sending one's children to the city to be educated an arduous task.

Life is good in the *soum* but opportunities lie elsewhere

Parents' opinions echoed that of the youth's as to why people were leaving the *soum*: to get jobs, pursuing children's education and looking for a better life. They also added that of those who left, many had done so because of failed herding: either they lost their animals to a *dzud* or the changing conditions of the pasturelands made herding difficult.

Significantly though, none of these parents were planning on moving despite the fact that some of the parents were of a low socio-economic income level. Common to all parents interviewed was that they all had steady income, either through jobs or herding. Further, some of the parents indicated that life was good in the *soum*; the primary problem was that the *soum* lacked an adequate amount of jobs and other financial opportunities for those who wished to stay. Parents also spoke to the benefits, both physically and mentally, of a life lived in the *soum* indicating that it still had very good things to offer.

> R: *Mainly, people move because they don't have animals. I heard that some people have emotional stress due to staying far away from close friends and relatives and miss them. Some people get over it ok if they have other relatives or friends in the city. But I never heard that the life of people who moved from here went down. As I said, they somehow found a way to survive and have food for every night...*
> Q. *Do you plan to move to the city?*
> R: *This is my home place. Everything is familiar for me here. All my best friends and relatives are living here. And also I am doing my favourite job. So everything is good for me here. I never think to change my living place. I am happy to live here.*

- Dumaa, 50 year old high-income level mother of three

> *I think there is some intellectual difference [between living here in the soum versus in UB], for example they grow up in a more open wide natural environment and have better memory and imagination skills. City kids stay between walls and they do not see things beyond.*

- Badam, 44 year old middle-income level father of three

Parents of youth interviewed recognized that youth needed to go to Ulaanbaatar to attend school and obtain a profession. They supported their children's move to the city despite the personal costs to themselves. However, they themselves chose not to move since they found considerable merit and contentment to living in Delgertsogt *soum*. We argue that having dependable income, either through employment or herding, is a crucial factor enabling them to stay in the *soum* and if it were to change they may be faced with the prospect of leaving as well.

Discussion

'Searching for a Better Life'

In the pursuit of livelihood, the most prevalent opportunities for the youth interviewed are found in leaving the *soum* to attend school in Ulaanbaatar. Schooling and jobs in UB are the means to 'a better life' – and according to the youth, better than what is available in the *soum*. While the parents of youth were content with their lives in the *soum,* indicated by their lack of desire to leave, they did intend for their children to leave. Parents recognized that their children had to go where the educational opportunities and jobs were and they prepared the way in the hopes that they would be successful once they got there.

Although these youth and parents of youth had either a direct or indirect connection to herding, this was not seen as a potential livelihood option. Only one person, Tuya, said that she would like to herd. However, even she wanted to be able to combine her skills as a cook with herding so as to take advantage of both sources of livelihood. While there are many successful herders, youth did not speak of herding as a path to 'a good/better life.' Rather, when it was mentioned it was either as the benign backdrop upon which *soum* life was lived or as an instance of failure when herders lost their animals to *dzuds* and unproductive pasturelands.

The flipside of the theme that ‘a good/better life’ is to be found in UB is the somewhat subordinated knowledge that there are negative aspects to city life. Youth spoke highly of the opportunities that the city had to offer in terms of what could be consumed (education, theatre, consumer goods, jobs) but when pressed were able to give examples of how the quality of life in the city could be threatened (unemployment, crime, lack of money or accommodation, no friends or family). Further, most of the youth had not experienced the city directly, having only heard about positive and negative aspects of urban life through others. Therefore the promise of ‘a good/better life’ remained largely untested for them and so they were eager for the experience, especially because they already knew that life in the *soum* did not hold the same type of promise. Parents were more guarded in their assessment of urban life, potentially due to their greater experience with both and the fact that they already had a ‘good’ life in the *soum*.

Youth Reproduction of the Social Order

On one level, these youth are motivated to migrate to UB to ‘find a better life’. The youth are imagining their future and actively taking action to make it happen. Simultaneously, youth also believe that there is nothing in the *soum* or the surrounding region for them. Even if they wanted to stay they could not because the education, jobs and training are just not available for them. They *must* go even though they *want* to go. Depending on how it is conceptualized, they are either propelled to leave due to structural forces or they are agents meeting opportunity head on. Either way, the actions of these youth could be viewed as recreating the social structures that either force them to move or provide the very opportunities that they are moving toward.

At first glance, it would appear that structure and agency theories provide an apt explanation for rural youth migration. However, theorist Anthony King argues that structure and agency theories are an example of an ontological dualism – the reduction of society to two irreconcilable elements (2004:5). As a result of this dualism, the human relations that give rise to social action are obscured.

King states that in spite of their differences Giddens, Bourdieu and Foucault "explain social reality by reference to a set of rules which impose upon individuals to ensure social order." (40) King argues that these theories are also examples of the aforementioned ontological dualism, explaining social reproduction "by reference to structure, defined as conceptual templates, patterns or rules." (ibid) As a result of this dualism, these theories are unable to account for the manifestation of social order.

King acknowledges that these theorists argue for the interrelation of structure and agency, asserting that "individuals are not determined by structure, habitus or discourse. They knowingly choose to follow certain rules." (ibid: 52) However, a problem arises. If action, via the individual, is undetermined then it will not be possible to produce coordinated social action since action *could* unfold in unpredictable, and hence unordered, ways. King argues that if "individuals merely choose to follow rules independently, then structure, habitus and discourse would not order human agency at all." (ibid)

King offers Ludwig Wittgenstein's famous argument[35] against an 'individualistic account of rule-following', commonly known as the 'sceptical paradox' (Kripke, 1982:4).

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[35] Wittgenstein is renowned for his contributions to philosophy that radically challenged commonly held assumptions by exposing their fundamental underlying assumptions. His work is relevant to not only philosophy but "remains the focus of intense interest that extends far beyond philosophy" (Addis, 2006:vii)

> This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with rules. The answer was: if everything can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here. (Wittgenstein 1976: 201)

In other words, rules provide no indication as to when they should be applied. In theory people could choose to apply the rule in an infinite number of ways. King asserts that the "sceptical paradox is radical and demonstrates the logical incoherence of the concept of individual rule-following." (ibid: 54) Rather than individual rule-following producing coordinated social action, it could conceivably produce an infinite number of actions. Seeing as how human action appears to be more or less predictable, another explanation must be offered.

Philosopher Saul Kripke interprets Wittgenstein to mean that "what counts as correct rule-following is not determined by the rule itself but what the community accepts as following it." (Addis, 2006: 106) In our case, the rule to be followed is 'to obtain a good life'[36] and how one goes about it comes down to a few 'acceptable' ways of fulfilling it: herding, working, or migration[37]. It runs contrary to Mongolian society, and most others for that matter, for people to remain in a place where 'life is not good'. There is a distinct motivation and encouragement for people to 'do' something about their situation to make it better, whatever that may entail.

We argue that the search for 'a good/better life' is in accordance with the rule 'to obtain a good life' and as such is implicated in the reproduction of the social order. Rather than understand youth who migrate as either being forced to, as a result of structural conditions, or as agents looking for opportunity, it is possible to envision them as applying a commonly held cultural rule to improve one's life if current life prospects are not at the level the society would accept as 'good enough'. For Wittgenstein, "co-ordinated rule-following could only be understood only so long as philosophy recognized the centrality of 'forms of life' to human existence." (King, 2004: 55). The concept 'forms of life' "refers to the taken-for-granted assumptions on the basis of which humans act. It is this fundamental agreement at the level of cultural pre-suppositions which allows humans to co-ordinate their actions." (ibid) King argues that modern society "is not reproduced as individuals follow rules, but only insofar as the members of the society mutually sustain their social relations with each other, all agreeing to certain common forms of conduct." (ibid: 57) In our example, the parents of youth, relatives, teachers and everyone else who is crucial along the way assist the youth to fulfill their goals of 'obtaining a good life' and thus reproduce the social order.

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[36] The notion of 'a good life' is not quantified in this paper but is taken as a given: whatever the society deems as acceptable is 'a good life'.

[37] There are others which are acceptable but these are the most dominant and apply directly to this study.

Mongolian youth and their parents are actively consenting to the societal rule to obtain a good life. By planning to move to UB for educational and employment opportunities these youth are consenting to the societal tenet that each and every person attain a good life and if it is not possible where one is at then it is necessary to seek it where it may be found.

Conclusion & Future Research

Concern about the rural 'youth exodus' in Mongolia is found in both rural and urban areas. Rural communities worry that their ability to provide services to remaining youth could be either severely curtailed or lost. In cities like Ulaanbaatar, classrooms are overcrowded, schooling proceeds in shifts and there are often not enough textbooks to go around. Often parents cannot enroll their children in schooling at all in the city because there are no spots available or the schools are too far away (Batbaatar *et al*, 2005). Both scenarios are serious issues for rural communities and urban educators because they complicate their ability to provide basic education to children and youth.

However, to conceive of youth who migrate as problematic is only seeing one side of the phenomenon. Youth who migrate, as we argue, are doing so in order to participate in Mongolian society as successful citizens who strive to 'achieve a good life'. The current situation of rural communities is that the opportunities needed to 'achieve a good life' simply are not there. As a result the youth need to leave their rural homes, whether they would wish otherwise. The parents of youth are also instrumental in facilitating youth's objectives and in doing so, along with a host of other community members, achieve the replication of Mongolian society.

An important area of future research would be to test this theoretical position from the standpoint of those who have moved and settled in UB, and those who moved but returned. There may not be many in the latter position but their impressions would be illuminating. For those who have moved it would be instructive to determine who attained 'a good life' and who had not, and what the strategies the latter were employing to strive towards this goal. It may very well be that they choose to return to rural areas as soon as the economic climate affords it.

The implications of this study for policy makers is to address the increasing demand for education, and the immense commitment rural Mongolians have to sending their children to schools. Alongside the quantity of post-secondary schools is the issue of quality – as parents are willing to pay more to know their children are receiving a good education. Investments into those sectors such as health care, education, business, and regional development could be increasingly met with educational programs to train

Mongolians for employment in these areas. If the Mongolian government wishes to see the countryside populated with herders and other small business workers, government assistance is likely increasingly necessary to provide support for business development, training programs, small business loans, and improved transportation and roads from rural areas to urban centres. Respondents in this study expressed desires to stay in Mongolia, rather than work temporarily abroad, thus language training in Korean, Russian, Chinese and English would also enhance their ability to engage with the many other countries setting up businesses in, and bringing non-governmental projects to, Mongolia. Greater investments may also be necessary to support herders who remain successful at herding, and who carry with them immense knowledge of the backbone industry of Mongolia for cashmere and food supplies.

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Chapter Four

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words:

Conclusions and Future Research

> The late-twentieth century's 'great transformation' has restructured young people's experiences wherever they have happened to live in the former communist bloc...young (and older) people have not just been affected by – they have also responded to – transformed contexts. Young adults' responses are worthy of special attention since they offer pointers to how life in their towns and cities will develop in the immediate future.
>
> Levan Tarkhnishvili *et al*, 'Waiting for the Market', 2005:324

Introduction

Youth migration from rural to urban zones is a serious matter for communities to contend with since they will be missing much of the vitality, creative thinking and sheer energy that young people bring to the social world. Instead of lending their abilities to the benefit of rural communities, becoming invested in rural life, youth will be giving their talents and energy to urban institutions and identifying more with an urban lifestyle. However, what must be remembered is how, in capitalist modernity, the social is subordinated to the economic (Polanyi, 1944). The economic thus shapes the relationship between communities and young people: where the community fails to meet the needs of youth to pursue a reasonable livelihood, discontent arises and, as in the case of Mongolia, youth may leave to pursue their goals. Conversely, where the two are in harmony the community fulfills the needs of youth by providing worthwhile livelihood options; and youth, in turn, give their vitality and energy back to the community through their pursuit of livelihood.[38]

While it is true that many of the youth in this project are planning to pursue an educational trajectory, which takes them out of the countryside to urban areas, resolving a conflict between what the community can provide and what the youth need, this does not tell the whole story. It is problematic to pitch the needs of the community against those of the youth since both are ends in and of themselves; neither group's needs can be subordinated to the other without inviting discontent, at best, and oppression, at worst. It is imperative to find a way out of this dichotomy so as to envision the actions of youth in ways that are instructive or productive, rather than a story of individual needs trumping community continuity.

Summary of Findings

The results of the quantitative and qualitative studies paint a certain picture of the Mongolian youth who participated in this project. Many of these youth are expecting to pursue their livelihood either in their home area of Dundgovi via herding or in urban areas through post-secondary educational schooling. However, a group of youth was identified who will be doing neither herding nor pursuing education. At this point it is uncertain what they expect to do for a livelihood since job prospects in the *soum* are very slim. It is possible that they may find a source of income through the burgeoning informal economy that is supporting many who have moved to Ulaanbaatar and who are either unemployed or underemployed (Bikales *et al*, 2000; Morris, 2001)

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[38] Although this may smack of determinism, I am making the point that these are the structural conditions youth contend with in their search for a good life. In other words, youth must pursue a good life, as a societal goal, and since obtaining income (of some kind) is the means by which to obtain that good life, youth may need to leave if the *soum* does not have any means of income generation.

Youth who planned to continue their education in Ulaanbaatar were doing so with the understanding that to move to Ulaanbaatar is to better one's life, primarily if a good life cannot be found where one currently lives. While it was acknowledged that moving was problematic to their community it was encapsulated as 'having no choice'. Further, going to Ulaanbaatar was considered a viable option for obtaining a better life despite the fact that these youth were cognizant of the dangers and problems of city life. Rural life, while still valuable for its 'clean living', falls short of what urban life can provide materially.

Regardless, youth are not merely obeying the dictates of the overarching economic order. The relationship between structures and human agency is dialectical rather than oppositional. By expecting to pursue livelihoods that are sustainable in the current economic milieu, and making the moves where necessary, youth are able to advance their own goals while participating in the available structures, thus arriving at a synthesis of the two: the reproduction of the social order.

Policy Implications

This research has identified that two thirds of youth in the quantitative study do not expect to enter into the traditional occupation of herding. The limited number of employment opportunities that currently exists in Delgertsogt soum result in youth must find jobs elsewhere. Government representatives, as well as non-governmental organizations, need to focus energy and resources in creating employment that will better link the pastoral economy to markets in urban zones. For example, transportation networks need to be fortified to ensure reliable and secure transportation of meat and milk products to market; an investment in refrigerated transport trucks would result in greater access to markets for herders in remote areas; and the training of people to act as brokers between herders and meat processing plants or stores where animal products are to be sold.

There is also an immediate need for planning around the sustainability of the pastoral commons. The threat of devastation by frequent *dzuds,* over-grazing and desertification could mean that fewer and fewer youth have the option to take on herding as a livelihood. Policy makers and NGOs must direct resources to assist herders in managing the pastoral commons in a way that ensures the land is there for future herders. One way that this could be addressed is by providing incentives for herders to reestablish collectives, perhaps similar to those established in both socialist and pre-socialist times, enabling herders to collectively manage the lands so as to avoid overgrazing.

Future Theoretical Directions

Youth transitions to adulthood are an important part of the lifecourse, that much is certain. In advanced capitalist countries this transition is marked by the individualization of agency while acting in the risk society of late modernity (Lehmann, 2004). Individuals now must be more reflexively engaged in their lives in order to "make sense of the opportunities" available to them (ibid:380). However, increased opportunities mean increased risk, for it is possible for one to choose badly amongst a range of options. It is not clear that this is phenomenon is present or even beginning to occur in post-socialist Mongolia, or any other post-socialist nation, for that matter. It is a worthy topic of theoretical pursuit since it would examine how the structures of late modernity become incorporated, transformed or rejected through youth's reproduction of the social order at a time of great change. It would add to theories on how societies with recent historical non-capitalist market orientations select "growth areas" for their up and coming young workers within the larger economic and technological forces, and environmental constraints, that constitute late modernity.

Future Areas of Research

One group of youth that our project did not have access to was youth from Delgertsogt soum who had already moved. This is an important area for future research since knowing how rural youth fare once they move to the city could provide crucial information not only to parents looking to send their children to UB but also to educators and policy makers who need to successfully address the issue of rural development and urban planning. Such research could track longitudinal trends on socio-economic levels pre- and post-migration to the city, report on the achievement of migrants' goals, as well as subsequent migration patterns (e.g., such as moves back to the countryside or other urban centres in Mongolia). This last point is especially interesting since it could be possible to assess whether or not the phenomenon of rural return is occurring in Mongolia as it is in other areas of the world.

This study did not focus on youth who herd, but these individuals represent those who are reproducing rural herding Mongolia. Future research could address how post-socialist youth are similar to and different from their parents, noting the different political and economic milieu of their respective upbringings and how this influences their collective arrangements to reduce herding livelihood risks, such as the re-construction of cooperatives, development of emergency plans for future dzuds (issues of local interest according to the Delgertsogt *soum's* governor's office), or the initiation of small scale businesses. Further, the future of herding depends on knowing if these youth plan to continue herding for their entire lives, or if they consider it an option 'for now' but may plan on doing something else in the future. Such research could have important implications for local approaches and priorities for rural development in Mongolia.

Concluding Remarks

Mongolian youth live at an extremely interesting time in our world's history and a study examining their choices in light of the structures they must contend with is indeed a worthy academic endeavour. The reproduction of Mongolian society depends on the decisions made by all its members, however youth hold a special place by virtue of their significance. As trite as it may sound, youth are the future leaders. Low in-migration to Mongolia from other countries, and a sharply reduced fertility rate in recent years (a demographic shift resulting from the relaxing of abortion laws in 1989 and the subsequent economic transition in the early 1990s; see Aassve & Altankhuyag, 2002), suggests that rural youth of today will have immense influence over Mongolia's future. It will be most interesting to see how the nation and its people fare under the leadership of the first children raised after the end of socialism.

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APPENDIX A

Survey and Interview Study Timeline:

July 03, 2006 begin intensive literature review
July 21, 2006 submit rough draft of questionnaire for review by principal investigators
Aug 01, 2006 submit rough draft of interview questions for review by principal investigators
Aug 18, 2006 submit research proposal (including survey) to the University of Alberta's Health Ethics Review Board (HREB)
Sept 04, 2006 approval obtained by HREB

In Mongolia: University of Alberta Research Team Timeline

Team members: Dr. Lory Laing, PI; Dr. Naomi Krogman, co-PI, Victoria Laidlaw, MSc student

Intended length of stay in Mongolia: October 17 to November 05, 2006

Tuesday, October 17 : Lory and Victoria arrive in Ulaanbataar
18 : Begin working: Pre-test questionnaire in a rural soum near to UB
19 : Questionnaire revisions / Purchase supplies for the field
20 : Finalization of questionnaire revisions and printing
21 : Travel day to Delgertsogt Soum, Dundgobi Aimag
22 : Get-together with community to disseminate results thus far and explain next step, also share power point slide show of pictures from previous two trips
Monday, October 23 : Enumerator training day (Enumerator recruitment has been conducted by NCHD between September 15-October 15, 2006)
24 : Begin data collection
25 : ” ” / Naomi arrives in Ulaanbataar
26 : ì ì / Naomi arrives in soum centre
27 : ì ì / Overlap day for Naomi and Lory
28 : ì ì / Lory leaves soum centre
29 : ì ì / Lory leaves Ulaanbataar
Monday, October 30 : ì ì / Naomi and Vicki lead data collect
31 : ì ì /data collection
Wed, November 01 : ì ì /data collection
02 : ì ì /data collection
03 : Travel day to Ulaanbataar
04 : Debriefing at the National Centre for Health Development
Sun, November 05 : Naomi and Victoria leave Ulaanbataar

Appendix B

ORAL INFORMATION GIVEN TO PARTICIPANTS BEFORE SURVEY

For use with general study participants (does not include youth 16-18 attending school)

This survey is to help the Mongolian National Centre for Health Development, and partner researchers at the University of Alberta, better understand the changing conditions in the Soum and how this might impact health, particularly for adolescents. Drs. Khishgee, Laing and Krogman, along with researcher Naraa Jamiyanjamts, were in Delgersogt for a couple of weeks last fall to carry out a number of exercises with soum residents on this same topic. They are back now to carry out a survey with all residents of Delgertsogt soum between the ages of 16 and 55 years of age. It will take about 30 minutes of your time to complete the survey. We will not share individual information collected in the survey with anyone but the research team. The findings may be used for publications, presentations and to inform the Mongolian government. Names will not be recorded in the survey. If you decide to complete the survey but do not want to answer specific questions you may choose not to. You are free to discontinue the survey at any time without having to give any explanation. Your participation is completely voluntary. Participants in the survey will not be paid for their time. If you had to travel to the soum to participate in the survey, you will be paid 2 000 tugrigs to cover your travel and meal costs. If you decide to quit the survey at any time after it has started, you will still be paid for your expenses for traveling to complete the survey.

Appendix C: Survey Questionnaire

Determinants of adolescent reproductive health in rural Mongolia – Household survey

Enumerator Notes [EN]:

- Where questions provide many options for the respondent to choose from, we will utilize laminate cards for respondents to follow along while you read the question to them. Please be sure to **read all** of the response options.
- People must have lived in Delgertsogt Soum for the previous six months in order to be eligible to complete this survey.
- Age group for survey is 16 to 55
- Where there are open-ended questions, please be sure to listen to what the person says and then distill the information into one or two sentences.

Date: ____________________

Interviewer: ____

Start time of interview: _______________ **End time:** ___________________

Interview setting:

Location: home of person / office / other_______________ (please circle one)

Members Present: ____

01. [EN: do not ask the person but assess yourself the gender of the person]

male ......1 female.......2

02. What is your current marital status? Choose the **one** option that **best describes** your situation.

Not married	1
Married	2
living together	3
divorced or formally separated	4
widowed	5

03. Do you have any children? [includes adopted, step- as well as biological children]

No 1 ⇨ **IF NO** go to Q.05
How many? ______(2)

04. a) How many children do you **expect** to be herders?

[EN: Write number] ________________

b) How many children did you **OR** do you **hope** to or be herders?

[EN: Write number] ________________

05. What's the **level** of education you've reached in school?

None	1	Post-secondary (includes college, university and professional school)	5
Grades 1-3	2		
Grades 4-8	3		
Grades 9-11	4		

06. How old are you? _______

--Respondents aged 26 + go to Section C: Occupation/Herding-- located on page 5

Section B : Youth Section for ages 16 - 25

07. a) Are you finished your schooling?

Yes	1 ⇨	**Go to** Q. 09
No	2	

b) If you are not finished, what educational goals do you **plan** to achieve?

Grades 4-8	1
Grades 9-11	2
Post-secondary	3

(includes college, university and professional school)

08. What is the highest educational goals you would **like** to achieve?

I have desired level of education	1	Skip to Q10
Grades 4-8	2	
Grades 9-11	3	
Post-secondary	4	

(includes college, university and professional school)

09. What is the **most important** barrier to attaining your educational goals? **Select one**.

I have/had no barriers	1
Lack funds to attend	2
Favoritism for who is admitted	3
No schools close enough	4
Poor quality schools	5
My labor is/was needed for herding	6
Other – please describe	7

____

____

10. Once completed schooling, what form of work do you **plan** to pursue? Please choose the **top two**.

Work in local government organization	1
Work in national company, organization	2
Work for a non-governmental organization (NGO)	3
Work in private company (ex. felt-making)	4
Run private business (ex. cobbler, dung collection)	5
Run small service	6
Trade	7
Herder	8
Driver	9
Other – please describe	10

11. Once completed schooling, what form of work would you **most like** to pursue? Please choose the top two.

Work in local government organization	1
Work in national level company, organization	2
Work for a non-governmental organization (NGO)	3
Work in private company (ex. felt-making)	4
Run private business (ex. cobbler, dung collection)	5
Run small service	6
Trade	7
Herder	8
Driver	9
Other – please describe	10

12. If you could be in a job you liked and live anywhere, where would you choose to live?

Countryside (1)	Soum Centre (2)	Aimag Centre (3)	Ulaan Baatar (4)	Outside of Mongolia (5)

13. Regardless of what education you receive, would you come back to the soum centre to live?

No..........1 Yes..........2 Depends...........3

Why? (4)

14. Compared to where you are now, where would you **prefer** to be living five years from now?

Same place (within Delgertsogt Soum)	1
Different place (outside of Delgertsogt Soum)	2

Section C : Occupation/Herding

15. What do you do for a living? (your main activity) Select the one or two that most accurately describes your daily activities.

Work in local government organization	1
Work in national company, organization	2
Work for a non-governmental organization (NGO)	3
Work in private company	4
Run private business (ie. shoe store)	5
Run small service (ie. food kiosk)	6
Trader	7
Herder	8
Pupil (up to secondary level)	9
Student (in higher education)	10
Work around community	11
Retired	12
Disabled or unable to work due to ill health	13
Unemployed	14
Other - please describe	15

16. Do you own livestock (includes pigs and chickens)? How many? [EN: Have person give their best guess]

No 1 ⇨ **IF NO** go to Q.25

Yes	2	Cows	number: _________	(3)
		Sheep	number: _________	(4)
		Goats	number: _________	(5)
		Horses	number: _________	(6)
		Camels	number: _________	(7)

Other (8)____

17. Do you consider yourself a good herder?

Yes............1 No...........2

Why? (3)

____

____

____

____

18. a) Have herding conditions changed environmentally in the past ten years? [EN: pause to let person think about this]

No	1 ⇨	**If no** go to Q. 20
Yes	2	

b) If yes, then how are you adapting to those changes?

Adapting well (1)	Somewhat adapting (2)	Not adapting well (3)

19. Please choose the answer that best describes your ability to adapt to changing herding conditions in the next 5 years in this region.

Very adaptable (1)	Somewhat adaptable (2)	Not very adaptable (3)	Do not expect to be able to adapt (4)

20. Now I'd like to ask you about the water, vegetation and grazing areas of the soum. How **satisfied** are you with the following:

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very dissatisfied

1. Quality of water	1	2	3	4
2. Availability of water	1	2	3	4
3. Quality of vegetation	1	2	3	4
4. Amount of vegetation	1	2	3	4
5. Access to good pasture	1	2	3	4
6. Amount of grazing areas	1	2	3	4
7. Accessibility to salt licks	1	2	3	4

21. Which of the following herding risks has been an issue for you in the past (3) years?

	Major problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
1. Dzud/loss of animals	1	2	3
2. Animal diseases/	1	2	3
3. Low prices for animal goods	1	2	3
4. Outsiders on your pasture	1	2	3
5. Injuries/diseases from animals (kick, bite)	1	2	3
6. Shortage of labor	1	2	3

22. How interested are you in expanding your herd?

Very interested (1)	Somewhat interested (2)	Not interested (3)	Do not know (4)

23. What is the **#1 limitation** to the improvement of your herding operation?

Transportation	1
Availability of productive pasture	2
Availability of water (for animals)	3
Ability to have more animals	4

Animal health	5
Access to markets	6
No limitation	7
Other – please describe	8

24. How frequently did you move your ger in 2005? How many times in 2006?

	Did not move **Circle**	**Number** of times	
1. 2006	1	________	(2)
2. 2005	1	________	(2)

25. How concerned are you about the ability of the pasture to regrow/replenish within 'your local area'?

Very concerned (1)	Somewhat concerned (2)	Not at all concerned (3)

26. Please rate your agreement with this statement…"Herding will continue for the next generation as it does today [illegible] this soum region."

Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Do not know (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)

If 'strongly disagree' or 'disagree' is selected then, why? (6)

27. How concerned are you about outsiders using the pastureland in 'your bagh area?'

Very concerned (1)	Somewhat concerned (2)	Not at all concerned (3)

28. To what extent are you satisfied with the 'rules' to use pastureland?

Very satisfied (1)	Somewhat satisfied (2)	Satisfied (3)	Not at all satisfied (4)

29. To what extent are you satisfied with the enforcement of 'rules' to use pastureland?

Very satisfied (1)	[✓ Somewhat satisfied (2)]	Satisfied (3)	Not at all satisfied (4)

Section D : Household: Economics, Technology and Transportation

30. Is your household income sufficient to meet your needs?

More than enough (1)	Enough (2)	Not enough (3)

31. How long did it take you to recover **economically** from the last dzud?

Not affected	1
Less than one year	2
Took one year to recover	3
Took two to five years to recover	4
Not recovered yet	5

32. How strong do you feel in your ability to maintain your way of life in the event of another dzud?

Very strong (1)	Strong (2)	Just OK (3)	Not very strong (4)	Weak (5)

33. What form of assistance would **most** benefit your livelihood?

Access to low interest loans	1
Short term wage employment	2
Access to markets	3
Better conditions to increase livestock	4
Training to improve business skills	5
Transportation	6
Better roads	7
Other – please describe	8

____

____

34. Where do you obtain household electricity from? **Circle all** that apply.

Don't use	1
Purchase from soum centre	2
Generator	3

Solar panels/photovoltaic cells	4

Other – please list (5) ____

35. Of these forms of technology, which do you own? **Circle all** that apply.

None	0
Cell phone	1
DVD/VHS player	2
TV set	3
Satellite dish	4
Computer	5
Radio	6
CD player	7
Cassette tape player	8
Video game	9

Other - please list (10)____

36. Of these forms of mechanized transportation, which do you own? **Circle all** that apply.

Bicycle	1	None	5
Motorcycle	2		
Jeep, truck, bus, etc	3		

Other - please list (4) ____

Section E : Migration

37. Where are you currently living?

Delgertsogt Soum Centre	1	
Countryside	2	
Elsewhere	3 ⇨	where? __________________

38. How long have you lived here? [EN: last two options assumes person has moved to Delgertsogt **FROM** other Aimags or Soums and does not include moves made during the year for children's schooling or other small moves]

Always	1 ⇨	**IF ALWAYS** go to Q. 43
Between six months to one year	2	
Number of years	_________ (3)	

39. Where did you live right before you moved here? [EN: use a map]

Ulaan Baatar ____________________(1)
Aimag centre ____________________[✓ (2)]
Soum centre ____________________(3)

Countryside area	________________	(4)

40. How long did you live at this previous place?

All my life		1
Between 0 to 6 months		2
Between 6 months to 1 year		3
Number of years	________	(4)

41. What is the #1 reason you moved here?

To find or take a job	1
Children's education	2
Get closer to central, urban areas	3
Get closer to relatives	4
Health reasons	5
To improve living conditions	6
Access to stores, markets	7
Forced by unsuccessful herding	8
Other – please explain	9

____

____

____

____

42. Since the move how your living conditions have changed ?

Improved	(1)	Stayed the same	(2)	Worsened	(3)

43. a) At this point in time, do you **plan to move** to another soum/aimag?

No	1 ⇨	**IF NO** go to Q. 44
Yes	2	

b) What is the **primary** reason you are planning to move? **Circle one**.

To find or take a job	1
Children's education	2
Get closer to central,urban areas	3
Get closer to relatives	4

Health reasons	5
To improve living conditions	6
Access to stores,markets	7
Forced by unsuccessful herding	8
Other – please explain	9

After answering this question, Go to Q. 46

44. At this point in time, would you **like to move** to another soum/aimag but for some reason cannot move?

No 1 Yes 2

45. What would **persuade** you, at this point in your life, to move? Select **up to three** reasons.

To get/take a job	1
Children's education	2
Get closer to urban areas	3
Get closer to relatives	4
Health reasons	5
To improve living conditions	6
Access to stores,services	7
Forced by unsuccessful herding	8
Other – please explain (8)	

46. What factors would **discourage** you, at this point in your life, from moving?

Cost	1
Family left behind	2
Do not know anyone in other places	3
Things are good here	4
Difficult to register in new locale	5

Promised to be a herder	6
No job prospects	7
Other please explain (8)	

____
____
____
____

47. For **people you know** who have moved, how have their living conditions changed?

Don't know anyone who moved (1)	Improved (2)	Stayed the same (3)	Worsened (4)	Don't know (5)

Section F : Mobility

48. How often do you travel outside the soum? [EN: only **one response** per line]
[question will be explained during the training]
I have never left the soum 1 ⇨ **IF SELECTED** go to Q.50

I live in the Soum Centre	Per month **Write the Number**	Per Year **Write the Number**	Every few years **Tick**	Don't go anywhere **Tick**
2. To Aimag centre				
3. To Ulaan Baatar				

I live in the Countryside	Per month **Write the Number**	Per year **Write the Number**	Every few years **Tick**	Don't go anywhere **Tick**
4. To Soum centre				
5. To Aimag centre				
6. To Ulaan Baatar				

49. This question asks about your activities at various places. Select the location that you go to **the most** to accomplish the following tasks.

	Soum centre	Aimag centre	Ulaan Baatar	Doesn't Apply
1. Buying goods	1	2	3	4
2. Selling goods	1	2	3	4

3. Medical treatment	1	2	3	4
4. Medical supplies	1	2	3	4
5. Accessing services: government, banking	1	2	3	4
6. Visiting relatives/family	1	2	3	4
7. Other (list)	1	2	3	4

Section G : Health and Well-being

50. In general, how is your health?

Very good (1)	Good (2)	Not bad (3)	Poor (4)

51. Do health problems interfere with your ability to conduct your livelihood?

Yes....................1 No.......................2

52. How satisfied with your life are you now?

Very satisfied (1)	Satisfied (2)	Dissatisfied (3)	Very dissatisfied (4)

Section H : Perceptions of the Community

53. The following are reasons for living in Delgertsogt. Please tell us which are the top three for you.

Grew up here	1
Close to relatives/in-laws	2
Take care of aging relatives/parents	3
Can't leave	4

Get closer to local people	5
Good opportunity for private business	6
Availability of job	7
Close to market	8
Scenic area	9
Safe area	10
A good school	11
Medical services available	12
Good leadership	13
Other - please describe	14

54. Please **choose** what best described each of the following services in Delgertsogt Soum.

	Very good	Good	Poor	Don't know
1. Employment opportunities	1	2	3	4
2. Medical services	1	2	3	4
3. School	1	2	3	4
4. Shopping facilities	1	2	3	4
5. Adequate housing	1	2	3	4
6. Recreational/sports facilities	1	2	3	4
7. Entertainment	1	2	3	4
8. Kindergarten/sanatorium	1	2	3	4
9. Senior citizens services	1	2	3	4
10.Adolescent and youth services	1	2	3	4
11.Police protection	1	2	3	4
12.Drinking water	1	2	3	4
13.Garbage collection	1	2	3	4
14.Availability of banks/loans	1	2	3	4
15.Library	1	2	3	4

55. This question looks at things that could pose problems for the future of a community. In your opinion, how much are these potential problems for the future of Delgertsogt soum?

	Not a problem	Somewhat problematic	Very problematic
1. Lack of job opportunities	1	2	3
2. Increase in crime, violence	1	2	3
3. Loss of livestock	1	2	3

4. Increased number of poor households	1	2	3
5. Closing of small businesses	1	2	3
6. Lack of leadership	1	2	3
7. Failure of people to work together	1	2	3
8. Loss of community spirit	1	2	3
9. People moving out of the soum	1	2	3
10. People moving into the soum from other aimags/soums	1	2	3
11. Weakening of traditional values	1	2	3
12. Alcohol abuse	1	2	3
13. Dzud	1	2	3
14. Other (describe)	1	2	3

56. Please **choose** what best describes Delgertsogt soum as a place to live by indicating your opinion about the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.Most everyone in the soum is allowed to contribute to soum affairs if they want to	1	2	3	4
2.Being a resident of the soum is like living with a group of close friends	1	2	3	4
3.When something needs to get				

done in the soum, the whole community gets behind it	1	2	3	4
4.Tradition of helping each other is still noticeable in our community	1	2	3	4
5.Local organizations are interested in what is best for all residents	1	2	3	4
6.If I feel like talking, I can find someone in the soum to talk to	1	2	3	4
7.If I need assistance/support, people would help me out	1	2	3	4
8.I think that 'every person for themselves' is a good description of how people in the soum act	1	2	3	4
9.Differences of opinion on public issues are avoided at all costs in the soum	1	2	3	4
10.If I called the soum governor's office here with a complaint, I would get a quick response	1	2	3	4
11.Overall, the soum has more things going for it than other communities	1	2	3	4
12.Residents have opportunities to get together and learn from each other	1	2	3	4

57. In your opinion, over the **past five years**, have **disputes** between people in the soum stayed the same, increased or decreased?

Same (1)	Increased (2)	Decreased (3)

58. What are the most common kinds of disputes? Circle the **top two**.

Theft of goods	1
Theft of animals	2
Trespassing on pasture land	3
Trespassing on water resources	4
Disputes between family members	5
Other – please describe	6

59. Examples of community improvement activities and events are formal meetings, campaigns, celebrations and so on. In the **past two years**, how would you describe your level of involvement in community improvement activities and events in Delgertsogt Soum Centre?

Not at all involved (1)	*Somewhat involved (2)*	*Very involved (3)*

60. In your opinion, in the past two years, has the level of people's involvement in community activities stayed the same, increased, or decreased?

Stayed the same	1 ⇨	go to Q.63
Increased	2 ⇨	go to Q.61
Decreased	3 ⇨	go to Q.62

61. Can you think of any reasons why people would be more involved in the community **now than two years before**? Please give your **top two** reasons.

Have more time to spare	1
Many people have moved here	2
Increasing community pride	3
More opportunities	4
Other – please describe	5

62. Can you think of any reasons why people would be less involved in the community **now than two years before**? Please give your **top two** reasons.

Too busy	1
Too many people have moved away	2
Health problems	3
Decreasing community pride	4

Transportation problems	5
No one to organize	6
Not enough activities of interest	7
Other – please describe	8

Section I : Social Support, Networking and Social Learning

63. People are generally helping each other at various times during the year. For example, people give each other food, make felt together, give money, help moving ger and/or animals or take people into the Aimag centre or city. In the last year, who has been most helpful in providing you some type of support? Please choose only **one person for each example of support**.

Who or what has helped you with:	Family	Friends and/or neighbours	Soum governor's office	Youth/ Women's organizations	Aid agencies	Religious institutions (all types)	Local bank	Social welfare agents	Other	No help
1. Food	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2. Clothes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3. Transportation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4. Felt making	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5. Financial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6. Other	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

64. Who helps with taking care of the animals? Please choose only **one option** for each activity.

I don't have animals………………1

	Immediate family	Relatives	Neighbours	Veterinarians	Other-describe	No Help
1. Vaccinations	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Sheep dip	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Birthing	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Fodder provision	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Fodder storage	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Cutting wool	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Combing cashmere	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Butchering	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Other - describe	1	2	3	4	5	6

65. How easy or difficult is it to get information when you need it?

Information about:		Very easy	Somewhat easy	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult	Don't know
1. Business		1	2	3	4	5
Health	2. General	1	2	3	4	5
	3. Reproductive health	1	2	3	4	5
News	4. National	1	2	3	4	5
	5. International	1	2	3	4	5
6. Education		1	2	3	4	5
7. Work		1	2	3	4	5
8. Herding		1	2	3	4	5
9. Dzud preparedness		1	2	3	4	5
10. Food preparation and storage		1	2	3	4	5
11. Other		1	2	3	4	5

66. Where are you most likely to learn about the following?

Learn about:	Family Members	Friends	Events like 'Day of Dairy	Media	Local government	Other (describe)

			Products'			
1. Animal care	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Food preparation	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Water quality	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Quantity of water	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Quality of vegetation	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Productive pasture land	1	2	3	4	5	6

Section J: Cultural Change Analysis: Personal Life Assessment

Question only for those respondents who are aged 26 and older.

67. Mongolia has changed a great deal in the past sixteen years or so. We're interested in your experience with these changes. Please compare your life now (2006) with your life in 1990. I will mention a few things, and if you could, please tell me if they now are much worse, a little worse, about the same, improved, or greatly improved than they were before.

	much worse	little worse	no change	Improved	greatly improved
01. Employment opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
02. Availability of food products:	1	2	3	4	5
03. Availability of foreign goods:	1	2	3	4	5
04. Availability of Household items (stove, fridge, tv)	1	2	3	4	5
05. Availability of housing	1	2	3	4	5

06. Quality of housing	1	2	3	4	5	
07. Price of products	1	2	3	4	5	
08. Availability of health care	1	2	3	4	5	
09. Quality of health care	1	2	3	4	5	
10. Supply of medications	1	2	3	4	5	
11. Costs of medications	1	2	3	4	5	
12. Availability of traditional medicine	1	2	3	4	5	
13. Personal health	1	2	3	4	5	**not applicable** (next 3 Qs only)
14. Health of spouse	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Health of children	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Health of parents	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Quality of diet	1	2	3	4	5	
18. Consumption of fruits	1	2	3	4	5	
19. Consumpt[illegible] vegetables	1	2	3	4	5	
20. Consumption of meats	1	2	3	4	5	
21. Consumption of dairy products	1	2	3	4	5	
22. Thinking about the 16 years since democracy, would you describe you and your family's economic situation to be:	1	2	3	4	5	

Appendix D

INFORMATION SHEET

(for community interviews)

To participate in the National Centre for Health Development and University of Alberta Research Project: **Adaptation to Change in Rural Mongolia**

Victoria Laidlaw, Dep't of Rural Economy
554 General Services Building
University of Alberta, Edmonton
Alberta, Canada T6G 2H1
Fax: 492-0268
vlaidlaw@ualberta.ca
Community contact: Narantsegtseg,
Social Worker, Soum Governor's Office

Lory Laing, Professor, Dep't of Public Health Sciences
13-103 Clinical Sciences Building, University of
Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 2G3

Naomi Krogman, Associate Professor, Dep't of Rural
Economy, 527 General Services Building
University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
T6G 2H1
Lory.laing@ualberta.ca 492-6211 (fax) 492-0364
Naomi.krogman@ualberta.ca 492- 4178 (fax) 492-0268

As you may know, your community has been involved in a research study with Drs. Laing and Krogman from the University of Alberta in Canada and the National Centre for Health Development here in Mongolia. I am part of a group of University of Alberta researchers interested in how changes in the way life is lived (since privatization began in the early 1990s) affects the wellbeing of people of Delgertsogt Soum. For this reason, I am interested in talking to you as someone who has lived through these changes.

During the past two times Drs. Laing, Krogman, Khishgee (in Spring 2004), and last Fall (2005), Naraa Jamiyanjamts collected information from people living in and around the Soum centre. In addition to the survey our team is presently conducting in the Soum, I am interviewing certain members of the community to understand how they are adapting to the opportunities and challenges life has brought since the onset of privatization. If you agree to participate, you may decide where you would like the interview to take place, and then I will meet you there with someone to interpret for me. The interview is likely to take one to two hours of your time. There is no compensation given for the interview but if you were to come to the Soum centre to grant the interview you would be compensated 2 000 tugrigs for travel expenses. I will take notes and also record the interview on a digital recorder to make sure we don't miss anything you say. The interview will be listened to by a translator who will translate and transcribe (write out everything you say word for word) the interview from Mongolian into English. The translator and transcriber will sign a confidentiality agreement stating that s/he will not share what you say with anyone else or keep a copy of the transcript. Only the researchers on the project, Masters student Victoria Laidlaw and supervisors, Laing and Krogman, will have access to the transcribed interviews. The summary of these interviews will be shared with the Mongolian National Centre for Health Development.

You can decide not to participate, not answer any particular questions, or stop the interview after it has begun. If after the interview is over and you decide you do not want your information used, please let the researchers know by November 3rd that you would like to withdraw your interview from the study. If, for some reason, you are not comfortable with an audio recorder we will not proceed with audio recording, and our assistant will take notes on your answers. You may also receive copies of any reports that are written that use your interview, and we will collect your address to send these materials to you on the consent form.

We will only identify your name on reports and publications if you request that we do so (we will note this on the consent form). Otherwise, your interview will be identified with a number, and this is all that will show up in any written report. We may quote what you say, and for this reason, it is possible that someone might be able to figure out who you are based on what you say. These transcribed interviews will be held under lock and key in Dr. Krogman's office at the University of Alberta.

Since this interview project is part of the larger project between the University of Alberta team and the National Centre for Health Development, all information will be shared for the benefit of all Mongolian peoples. The benefits of this research are that it describes an in-depth understanding of how Delgertsogt Soum residents are adapting to life circumstances (opportunities and challenges) since the transition to privatization both by the way they live their lives and by the decisions they make everyday.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to interview everyone in the Soum and so some people may be disappointed that they are not part of these interviews. It is possible that this research may raise community expectations that health policies will change as a result of this research. While all researchers involved on this project are not able to change policy, we hope that this work will influence policy by providing documentation of the current impact of economic changes on the overall health of Soum residents.

The interviews will be used to write a summary report to the Canadian Institute of Health Research and the Mongolian National Centre for Health Development. In addition, the information provided in the interviews may be presented at academic conferences and government meetings. The interview findings may appear in journal articles and presentations. Any publication from these interviews will first be reviewed and approved by research partners in the Mongolian National Centre for Health Development.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, and would like to discuss it with someone who is not directly involved, you may contact:

Oyun Lkhagvasuren, Officer of Health Promotion Department
National Centre for Health Development, Ulaan Bataar
Phone number 99092495

Community Contacts:
Narantsegtseg, Social Worker
Soum Governor's Office

Appendix E

ORAL CONSENT FORM

(for community interviews)

To participate in the University of Alberta and National Centre for Health Development Research Project: **Adaptation to Change in Rural Mongolia**

Victoria Laidlaw, Dep't of Rural Economy
554 General Services Building
University of Alberta, Edmonton
Alberta, Canada T6G 2H1
Fax: 492-0268
vlaidlaw@ualberta.ca
Community contact: Narantsegtseg,
Social Worker, Soum Governor's Office

Lory Laing, Professor, Dep't of Public Health Sciences
13-103 Clinical Sciences Building, University of Alberta,
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6H 2H1

Naomi Krogman, Associate Professor, Dep't of Rural
Economy, 527 General Services Building
University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
T6G 2H1
Lory.laing@ualberta.ca 492-6211 (fax) 492-0364
Naomi.krogman@ualberta.ca 492- 4178 (fax) 492-0268

I understand that I have been asked to participate in this study on how people from Delgertsogt Soum are adapting to opportunities and challenges since the transition. I understand I will be asked about the way I live my life and the decisions I make around education, herding, and health. I give my permission to be audio recorded. I have read the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I also understand that I can quit taking part in the study at any time and withdraw the interview up to the time the researchers leave the community November 3rd. I understand that the National Centre for Health Development and University of Alberta researchers will have access to the interview data. It is clear to me that the information may be used to inform future research research projects, and possibly be used in presentations, publications and publicly available reports.

Do you give consent to participate in this interview? Yes No

Special conditions the participant requested to do in the interview:

____

____

This study was explained to the participant by: ______________________

______________________ ______________________
Signature of Investigator Date

ADDRESS of participant noted here if participant would like summary document on interviews:

Appendix F

Research Project: **Adaptation to Change in Rural Mongolia**

Interview Questions

1) I know that education has always been very important to people in Mongolia. However, since the transition to privatization there has been a change in the way education has been delivered. Some of the changes have brought opportunities and some have brought challenges. What were some of the opportunities and challenges that you experienced and/or heard about?

Prompts: How did you take advantage of the opportunities?
How did you manage the challenges?
(What sorts of decisions were necessary in order to do these things?)

2) I've heard that it is generally believed that herding is the cultural link between all Mongolian people and that each citizen has the right to undertake it should they wish to. However, it happens that there are those who will never herd but still hold this belief. What do you think about this belief?

Prompts: How do other people talk about this belief?
Why (or why not) do you think this belief is important for Mongolians?

3) Television programs and movies are very popular around the world. I'd like to ask you now about your opinions on these. What kinds of programs and movies are your favorites?

Prompts: What kinds of stories do these programs and movies tell?
How do you feel about yourself when you see and hear these stories?
What do these stories make you think of in your own life?

4) Many people have made the decision to move away from the Soum centre for various reasons, because they wanted to or because they had to. What do you think of this?

Prompts: How do you feel about people's decision to move away?
What opportunities arise from moving away, as far as you can tell?
What challenges arise from moving away, as far as you can tell?
How are those who have left connected to this soum?

5) When children go away to study, at secondary school or post-secondary, they are exposed to and influenced by many things that are not a part of the herding life. What do you think these children will do with these experiences and this knowledge?

Prompts: Due to the exposure to the two lifestyles, herding and urban living, what opportunities do you think the children will grow up with?
What sorts of challenges will they have to adapt to?

6) Stories are an incredibly important part of any culture. Can you tell me a story about how life has changed since privatization began, either one you experienced yourself or if you are too young to have experienced it, one that you have heard from someone else?

Prompts: Knowing what you do now, what would you do differently? If it is not your story, what would you have done instead?
What does this story tell you about how the people adapted to the changing circumstances?

Supplementary List of References

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